

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

Volume 36, Number 51

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

March 30, 2012



Over the weekend Hebron Pharmacy, owned by Hayden "Spike" Houston and his wife Florence, will be switching over to a CVS/pharmacy after more than 38 years of service. The pharmacy was known for its quality service and small-town attributes like a gift department cared for by Florence and special home-deliveries of prescriptions.

Hebron Pharmacy To Become CVS

by Geeta Schrayter

On Tuesday afternoon, things seemed to be running like normal at Hebron Pharmacy. Customers perused different aisles, friendly faces could be found behind the counter and the sounds of chatter and the ringing phone filled the air. But a frequent customer would have likely noticed a familiar stuffed gorilla no longer hung from the ceiling. Upon walking towards the back, where the pharmacists worked diligently in their tell-tale white coats, it might be observed the mortar and pestles that used to line the shelf above the pharmacy were missing. And close inspection of a stack of boxes to the left would show some of them read "CVS/pharmacy."

The changes are due to the fact that today, at 6 p.m., the doors will close on Hebron Pharmacy after 38 years, and reopen again on Monday as CVS/pharmacy.

The move comes amid owner Hayden Houston's decision to retire and an agreeable deal with CVS.

"It's pretty simple," said Houston, who's fondly known as "Spike" around town. "I'm 69, I'm healthy [and] there's a number of things, like in any other business, that dictates" how things go including shrinking margins, the onset of mail-order-prescriptions and profitability.

He noted the business was still very healthy, but added that "the timing just seemed to be good."

Houston explained he hadn't given retire-

ment much thought until he was approached by CVS last November.

"There was interest in part due to the unique location and the unique structure of the pharmacy," he said, noting there were currently CVS/pharmacies in towns such as Willimantic, Glastonbury, East Hampton and Colchester. "So it makes Hebron just a viable kind of a place for a store such as CVS."

"But as far as retirement comes, I didn't give it a lot of thought," he added. "Then I realized you can't work until you're 100. At some point, you have to sell yourself to that fact."

In a joint statement released on March 26, it was explained CVS would be adding "new products and services to the store, including a larger selection of health, beauty, food and general merchandise, as well as a digital photo kiosk" and the implementation of the CVS ExtraCare program.

"Spike and Hebron Pharmacy have a well-earned reputation for providing a high level of pharmacy services to the community and we are committed to continuing that same level of service," wrote CVS/pharmacy regional manager Craig Theile. "We look forward to joining the Hebron community and helping people on their path to better health."

Houston, who said he started working in a pharmacy in Maine when he was only 14, opened Hebron Pharmacy with his wife Florence in 1974.

See Hebron Pharmacy Page 2

Golden Announces Retirement

by Joshua Anusewicz

After spending the last 42 years in the field of education—which might just qualify her for sainthood—Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden has announced that she plans to retire when her contract expires on December 31.

Golden announced her retirement during an executive session prior to the Board of Education's regular meeting on Monday.

Golden will remain superintendent until the end of the school year in June, but will remain onboard in an interim basis through December as the school board searches to fill the position.

"I have other things I want to do," Golden, 64, said Tuesday, listing spending time with her grandchildren and traveling as activities on her list. "We've done some great work here, the [school staff] and I. I think the district is in very good shape."

Golden has served as East Hampton's superintendent for the past five years. Prior to that, she was an assistant superintendent in the Wethersfield school system. Golden, who resides in Clinton, said she made the decision to retire this past January and knew right then that she had made a good choice.

"Once I made the decision, it just felt right,"

Golden said.

Looking back on her time in East Hampton this week, Golden admitted that she wasn't looking forward to leaving all of the people in the district she has forged "great relationships" with. "It's been an honor to work with this staff," she said, pointing out the central office staff and school administrators, in particular.

Golden was hesitant to "parse [her] career" to select any single achievements she was particularly proud of, but she did point out the district-wide advancements in technology, students and teacher achievement and improved test scores as accomplishments she was particularly pleased with during her tenure. She also commended the work of those who have served on the Board of Education, whom she said have sacrificed time and effort to come together for the betterment of the students.

"It's been such a pleasure working with the board," Golden said. "We've been very fortunate. They haven't been distracted by politics. They've stayed focused on the work that needs to be done."

And more work needs to be done by the board over the upcoming months, which Golden admitted was part of the reason she wasn't go-

ing to "leave them in the lurch" by departing immediately. "There's a lot to do in the next six months," she observed, mentioning the education specifications from the building committee for the high school renovation project and teacher negotiations in August.

Oh, and helping find a replacement.

"It's a big loss, some big shoes to fill," said Board of Education Chairman Mark Laraia on Wednesday.

Laraia admitted he was "disappointed" when Golden told him two weeks ago about her plans to retire, but said that he "respects her decision." He has had the opportunity to work closely with Golden, serving the past four years on the school board. Through working with Golden, he has no doubt that through her leadership, the district has grown and improved exponentially.

"We've really moved forward with technology, test scores have gone up," Laraia said. "That's a direct result of her leadership." He added, "She was always trying to move things forward; she just never stopped."

Even though she may not have directly handled every individual aspect of the district, Laraia said that faculty and administrators that worked under her guidance always had her support and improved because of it. He also men-

tioned her close relationship with the teachers' union and her decision to keep special education within the district, both of which have helped the board realize significant savings in its budget.

Laraia said that because the board was just apprised of Golden's retirement this week, no discussions have taken place about the process to replace the superintendent. He said that the search for a new candidate will be "interesting," as there are currently over 20 other districts in the state that will also be looking for a superintendent over the next year. Golden said, however, that she plans to work with the board to find a suitable replacement and, given that she will not be leaving until December, there is no rush at the moment.

"We have time, fortunately," Laraia said.

The next Board of Education meeting will be held on Monday, April 9, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.



Dr. Judith Golden

Hebron Pharmacy cont. from Front Page

“My wife and I started the business together. We worked together from the beginning and she still does the gift department which is one of the things that’s going to be sorely missed,” he said, noting CVS doesn’t have one and it had “become an integral part of our draw.”

The gift department, which was an ideal place to get a last-minute gift, has been a part of the pharmacy since it first opened, when it was located in a store next to Ted’s, explained Houston.

“Then I purchased this land and we built our building” in 1992, he said. Six years later, “we added on to its present size which is about 6,500 square feet.”

Houston explained they had about 30 employees, some of whom will continue to work at CVS.

“Most of our pharmacists and some of our help” will be staying on, he said.

And it’s the people he’s worked with that Houston considers one of the things he’ll miss most.

“I can’t imagine how many people [I’ve had work here]; if I had known I was going to be around this long and I had started a collage of young ladies and gentlemen who have worked for me – it would be a wonderful thing,” he said, adding it was rewarding to watch them grow. Houston shared that he had a girl who presently works for him whose grandmother also worked at the pharmacy.

Along with the employees, Houston said he’d miss the people and customer interactions.

Florence agreed, saying she’d miss “the co-workers and customers definitely,” and added that “it hasn’t sunk in yet.”

“No, not at all,” said Houston, who wasn’t yet sure what he’d do with the extra time. (“I’ll have time to mow my grass,” he joked.)

And it’s apparent the customers – and Hebron community – will miss Houston and his family in return.

Hebron resident, friend of Houston, and former Board of Selectmen Chair Bill Garrison said Houston was “a very quiet, great citizen. He’s done more for the kids and other people and other events in town [than just through the pharmacy], but very quietly.”

AHM Youth and Family Services is an example of an organization helped by the

Houstons.

“Spike and Florence and their entire family have meant so much to the community. And they’ve been so supportive of our organization,” AHM Director Joel Rosenberg said Wednesday

Rosenberg explained that the Houstons were among one of the very first business owners to get involved and support AHM.

“And Spike and Florence over the years have just been – they’re wonderful, warm people who care greatly about the community,” Rosenberg added. “And they’ve stood by that... the impact they’ve had on our organization has been nothing short of phenomenal.”

Rosenberg went on to say the work of the family wouldn’t be forgotten. “In terms of the legacy that they’ve made over the years, through their business and supporting AHM, it will never be forgotten,” he said. “I can assure you, through AHM, it will never be forgotten.”

“Spike is going to be missed by a lot of people in town, particularly the older people who relied on him forever,” added Garrison. “It’s too bad, but again, things happen – things change. He’s worked hard for a lot of years. This is an opportunity for him to bow out gracefully, but I know everybody’s going to miss him.”

Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz said she was also sad to see him go and mentioned the Houston family and Hebron Pharmacy had served five generations of her family: her grandmother, mother, herself, her daughters and granddaughters.

“So we will really miss him, but at the same time... it’s nice they’re able to get to this point where they can retire,” she said.

Pomproicz added that the Houston family has done “many nice things that have gone unmentioned or unnoticed” over the years for individuals in the community, “whether it be delivering their prescriptions if there’s a problem or someone doesn’t have a ride, or opening the store if someone needs to get medication on short notice.

“These are the kinds of services we probably won’t get with the bigger corporations,” she stated.

Board of Selectmen Chair Jeff Watt said Wednesday that Houston had made an impact on everybody in the community, and mentioned



Hebron Pharmacy has been a fixture in town for close to four decades – operating at its current location for the past 20 years, and another 18 in a store next to Ted’s Supermarket. The pharmacy will close at 6 p.m. this evening, and reopen on Monday as a CVS/pharmacy.

he was one of the households Houston delivered to.

“He would have medicine delivered to the house because my wife couldn’t go out and get it for our triplets,” he said, and added, “being able to retire now – I give him all the happiness in the world for his next venture.”

Watt went on to say Houston’s decision to retire would make an impact on the town, as well.

“Even with him leaving, he’s going to make an impact on the town, because he’ll be bringing in CVS,” he said. “This may be the start of the economic development we’ve been looking for in town. He may be the spur.”

Town Planner Mike O’Leary agreed. “Hebron Pharmacy has been a great business in town,” he said. “They have been a great long-term employer in the community and have supported many, many local teams and organizations and activities in town.”

O’Leary continued: “Hopefully, this is a win-win for everyone. The fact that a national retail tenant such as CVS has interest in locating in

Hebron shows that the town is attractive to these types of users, and that is a positive statement for future economic growth in town.”

Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney said Houston was “a pillar in the community,” and the change was bittersweet.

“Yeah, we like to see new business come to town, but at the same time there’s some concerns – his hometown quality in how he serviced Hebron is going to be missed,” he said, adding that Houston worked day and night and “really catered to this town.”

But Hebron Pharmacy’s closing doesn’t mean the Houston family will disappear along with the decorative mortar and pestles, the gift department and George, the stuffed toy gorilla who hung from the ceiling and was dressed for every holiday (who now has a home with their youngest grandson).

“We’ll both be here,” said Florence. “We’re staying right in town and quite visible. This is home. Vacations are nice, but it’s always nice to come home.”

RHAM Board Adds Lacrosse

by Geeta Schrayter

At a special meeting of the RHAM Board of Education on Monday, the decision was made to add lacrosse to the 2012-13 budget at a cost of \$40,550.

The sport has been self-funded for the past three years, supported through tag sales, fundraising and a fee of \$300 per student athlete.

At a board meeting on Monday, March 19, students, parents and community members attended to show their support for the move, citing health benefits and the advantage playing sports can give students when applying to colleges. It was also mentioned that the \$300 fee prevents students without the financial means to pay from participating.

“There are a lot of kids that can’t afford to play,” Hebron resident Sara Tarca said at the March 19 meeting, adding, “I think that’s a crime.”

But if the RHAM budget passes at the May referendum, lacrosse would be fully funded, and students interested in playing would only need to pay the \$185 pay-to-play fee required for participation in other RHAM sports.

The majority of the board members expressed support for the decision.

“I would like to leave lacrosse in as a decision possibility – absolutely,” said board member Brenda Milhomme.

Board Chairman Michael Turner added, “I think it would be difficult to take lacrosse out,” since, as superintendent Bob Siminski noted, “three years ago the board made a commitment to take lacrosse into the fold” and fully fund it.

But board member Dieter Zimmer said the funds and focus should remain elsewhere.

“I would say we should concentrate on the education and not so much what is after school [programs],” he said, adding, “my stand is lacrosse should be still postponed.”

Zimmer went on to say he wasn’t against

sports in general, and Turner added Zimmer was “very much for intramural sports” – a stance he’s been consistent with over the years.

“I strongly oppose this,” Zimmer said before voting against the recommendation. But the motion passed 7-1.

Motions to include four other decision packages were also made at the meeting. Freshmen Academy – an intervention program that supports at-risk freshmen – was added at a cost of \$30,278 for a paraprofessional. The paraprofessional would supervise study halls and duties, offering academic and social support to at-risk freshman. The motion passed unanimously.

The decision package for an additional maintenance worker to oversee care of the athletic fields was also added at a cost of \$43,152.

High School Principal Scott Leslie explained in his presentation on March 19 that the maintenance worker would “address the needs of repairing our athletic fields for competition and practice.”

During public comment, Hebron Board of Selectmen Chair Jeff Watt said, “I feel personally uncomfortable with that.” He added that before a maintenance worker was hired, “it would be good to get a plan to maintain” the existing fields together. Watt offered the assistance of Rich Calarco with the Hebron Parks and Recreation Department and Hebron Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney, who is also the director of public works. He continued on to say the fields in Hebron are used more than those at RHAM, but are in better condition.

“I would just have you consider getting a maintenance program in place before hiring another person,” he said.

The recommended motion passed 5-3, with members Kenneth Lee, Laura Steiner and Amy D’Amaddio opposed.

On Wednesday, Lee explained he voted

against it due to the suggestions made by Watt.

“I want to look into – Hebron was going to come around and give some ideas on what has to be done” to help maintain the fields, he said, adding, “we may be able to work with [Hebron] to save on it and maybe use them for a lesser fee.”

Lee continued on to say nothing was set yet – “we’re still negotiating and going back and forth” – and said the board was doing whatever they could “so we can save money wherever.”

Finally, a motion was made to add money to the budget for new band instruments. Discussion took place on whether to add \$8,000 to purchase instruments outright or add \$5,000 for a lease-to-purchase program that would require the board make a five-year commitment.

Milhomme asked if the lease-to-purchase deal was better than purchasing outright, and Leslie explained the former would allow for the purchase of about 16-18 instruments, compared to just three.

In the end, a motion was made that a lease purchase for \$5,000 for band instruments be added to the fiscal year 2012-13 budget. The motion passed unanimously.

Members also voted to add \$500 in order to establish a reserve fund. The resolution stated “that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-51(d)(2), a reserve fund entitled ‘Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures’ is hereby established.”

Turner explained the motion didn’t instantly establish the fund, but would allow the district to place a question regarding the fund on the ballot at the May referendum.

The motion passed unanimously.

The board also discussed pre-purchasing. A pre-purchasing amount of \$159,144 was recommended to the board, but discussion ensued as to whether it would be best to halve the

amount and return some of the surplus funds to the towns.

“I’d like to see it at half the amount to fund the decision packages easier,” said Milhomme.

“Last year, we had a large surplus – the town trusts us to have our budget, manage it and not overspend it,” said Turner. “If you pre-purchase this large amount, you start skewing the budget.” Earlier in the meeting, Turner had expressed a desire to pre-purchase a smaller amount: \$69,000.

But Board Member James Cherry was in favor of the full number.

“I think it should be full,” Cherry said. “I think it’s false to ask for a bigger increase” from the towns through taxes, after returning surplus money to them.

But Lee felt there should be no pre-purchasing, and all of the money should be returned.

Board Member Laura Steiner felt pre-purchasing was a positive choice, but agreed with Lee. “I think it’s good to pre-purchase but [Lee] has a good point – I pick going for a partial [number],” Steiner said.

In the end, a motion was made to pre-purchase \$80,000 for textbooks, supplies and library books that passed 6-2, with Lee and Turner against.

The changes made at the meeting brought the budget from \$25,114,271, or a 2.17 percent increase, to \$25,153,751, or 2.33 percent.

The motion to present the new amount at the public hearing on Monday, April 9, passed unanimously, but Turner added just because these items would be presented doesn’t mean they were set in stone.

“Anything can change,” he said.

The public hearing will be held Monday, April 9, at 7 p.m. in the RHAM High School auditorium.

Hebron Budget Finalized at a 4.81 Percent Reduction

by Geeta Schrayter

The Hebron Board of Selectmen finalized details on the 2012-13 budget at a special meeting on Tuesday, March 27. The board discussed various reductions, concluding with a recommendation to the Board of Finance for a town government expenditure budget of \$8,500,621.

Discussed reductions included dropping the assessor's hours from 19 to 17 per week for \$1,611 savings and having the wetlands agent with the planning and development commission work 17 hours as opposed to the requested 19 for \$6,741 worth of savings, while enlisting the help of a summer intern at a cost of \$2,000.

"I'd rather get the \$2,000 for the intern than bring [the wetland agent's hours] to 19" and pay for the increase, said Board Chair Jeff Watt.

The library was also an area of discussion. "I'm a frequent user of the library and I think they have a great selection," said Selectman Brian O'Connell, who felt funding for materials should be reduced.

"I think they should look into fundraising," he added. "They need to be more efficient with how they use their money."

"I agree with your reduction," said Watt, but added, "I'd like to see an increase of library

hours."

The reduction in funding for materials was made for \$1,065 worth of savings, while an increase in library hours added \$1,980 for payroll.

The reductions made at the meeting brought the bottom line of the budget down \$9,987.

After board members discussed the areas they'd like to see changed, they expressed their thoughts on the budget process.

"I think everyone's done a tremendous job in crafting a very responsible budget," stated Selectwoman Gayle Mulligan. "I fully support it [and] I would like that on May 8, everybody come out and vote."

O'Connell seconded her sentiments.

"It's an honor to work with you all and I enjoy our thought process, our hard work together," he said, adding, "we put our political differences aside and we work for the members of our community, and it's nice to work toward a common end and actually accomplish something. It can be done. Take note."

"I think having a small town where you can actually have the conversations back and forth

is still pretty unique to New England," added Watt. "I'm glad we live in a town that gives us the freedom to do that and I hope it continues. I appreciate everything done."

A motion was then made to recommend the proposed town government expenditure budget of \$8,500,621 to the Board of Finance, a 4.81 percent reduction over the current year's budget of \$8,929,714.

The budget includes town government at \$6,464,092, a contribution of \$644,084 for Capital Improvement, an Open Space contribution of \$100,000, a contribution to the Capital Non-Recurring fund at \$10,687, a \$50,000 contribution for the funding of capital projects between \$5,000-25,000, and a \$50,000 contribution to Revaluation and Debt Services at \$1,170,705.

Additionally, a motion was made to recommend a proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget of \$923,968 to the Board of Finance.

Both motions passed unanimously.

On Wednesday, Watt further expressed his feelings regarding the finalized budget.

"I was very happy with the final solution" and the further reduction, he said, adding, "being able to come in at 4.8 percent less than last year, I think the board worked very hard to make sure that we could keep our debt down and be able to increase capital expenditures at the same time and provide a lot of the core services for the town."

Now that the selectmen have recommended their budget to the Board of Finance, finance board members will review budget requests during the beginning of April, and their recommended budget will be presented at the public hearing.

At the meeting, Selectman Mark Stuart expressed his support for the budget and encouraged voters to participate.

"I would like to see a big turnout for the budget referendum – up or down," he said. "I think it's important for the majority of voters to come out. I support this budget and I hope it does pass."

* * *

The public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, April 12 at 7 p.m. at RHAM High School.

Revamped Richmond Library Reopened in Marlborough

by Katelyn Kelleher

The Richmond Memorial Library briefly closed last week to undergo long-needed renovations and, although still in the transformation process, has reopened for business.

The library was closed March 15, 16, and 19-23 for modifications. It reopened Saturday looking different—with new carpet on both floors and the green trim painted red.

There was more behind the makeover than just cosmetics, however. The old green and beige carpeting on the first floor, original to the 1987 building, had endured two floods over the past year. Library Director Nancy Wood said in February 2011, a pipe burst in the attic and water came down through the book drop and flooded the library. Additionally, during the October snowstorm, a running toilet filled the septic tank and caused water to push back into the library. A janitor discovered the flooding two days after the storm.

The town's insurance covered \$34,000 of the \$35,000 it cost to re-carpet the first floor, Wood said.

"It was so extensive. It literally ran down the aisles and came back into the staff room and story room," Wood said. "[The janitor] had boots on so it was like two inches up his boots when he walked into the center part."

Wood said the library was lucky, in that it only lost about 25 books during the flood. The water damage, however, is still apparent on the bottoms of the bookcases, which show either warping or rusting. Fortunately, Wood said, the computer equipment wasn't damaged because the computer towers sit on concrete blocks on the floor.

The second floor carpet needed replacing as well because it was 25 years old, worn out, and wouldn't match the new carpeting on the first floor. However, insurance would not cover the non-flood-damaged second floor, so library of-

ficials appealed to the Board of Selectmen in February for the \$5,611 to finish off the project. The board approved the library's request and covered the costs of the carpet with undesignated money from the town's capital non-recurring fund.

The library had needed new carpet for years, but each year, the funding was deferred in favor of other expenses at the school, town hall or public works, Wood said.

But after the flooding, the replacement of the carpet became absolutely necessary. "We had put it in the capital improvement plan in past years because our carpet was getting kind of tatty," Wood said. "And then when the town did tests on the carpet after it was damaged, there was bacteria on the carpet, so we knew it really should be removed."

It took some heavy machinery to lift the book stacks, which is why the library wanted to do both floors in the same project. A nitrogen lift picked the stacks up off the ground and rollers were put underneath. Then a winch moved the stacks, fully loaded with books. "It was really efficient because they did the whole building in four days," Wood said.

With the machinery at hand, the library staff decided it was time to replace the old circulation desk as well. "We had been talking about a desk redesign for more than a year because the old one basically took up so much space," Wood said. "We knew that desk was going to have to be moved, and it was a behemoth, so we thought if we're going to do the desk, let's just do it now."

The library has a new desk coming in two to three weeks, which will be much more practical than the old. "You couldn't really sit at [the old desk] and you couldn't really stand at it, either, and be comfortable," Wood said.

The new, custom-built desk from Marlborough's Heartwood Cabinetry will be Americans



Files are in temporary shelving on new carpeting while Richmond Memorial Library waits two to three weeks for its new circulation desk. The library is currently collecting donations to cover the remaining cost of the desk.

with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible and will have side-by-side work stations. Its red Formica top will match the new trim and carpet.

The library is collecting donations for the \$20,000 desk, and has already collected \$3,000. "People have been really generous," Wood said. The desk will be installed in two to three weeks, regardless of whether the \$20,000 in donations is met, and the library might have to dip into a small investment portfolio, which Wood said

they would rather not do.

Wood said the library is utilizing its funds as best it can. "For working on a shoestring, it could be worse," she said.

The library is still collecting donations for the desk, which can be labeled and left in the book drop or mailed to Richmond Memorial Library at P.O. Box 387, Marlborough, CT 06447. The library will remain open throughout the desk installation.

Students Celebrate Cultures at Marlborough Elementary

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

Marlborough Elementary School honored different cultures and heritages during two events this month, a Multicultural Day and a Rhyme Celebration.

The school held its annual Multicultural Day Wednesday, March 21, and showcased students' projects and featured a performer who taught the children African dance, song and culture.

Spanish teacher Kristen Vrabie and Special Education teacher Louise Plack organized the event, which varies in format each year. Vrabie said the students show off projects that they've done in different classes that tie in with the curriculum with each grade level. "We'll give some kind of project that they've done during the year that has some multicultural tie-in or heritage, like a family tree in sixth grade, or third grade did holidays," she said. "This year we had kids wearing different multicultural heritage clothing...kids have performed a skit in other years."

The event gives students a chance to represent their own heritage and learn about other students'.

Vrabie said third-graders performed a Japanese song on their recorders.

A Soro-Bindi performer, Iddi Saaka, from the Gonja ethnic group of northern Ghana, was a guest performer at Multicultural Day. Soro-Bindi is a 45-minute workshop and performance that teaches children songs, dances and stories of Ghanaian culture.

Saaka performed and provided an explanation of the culture in Ghana. Then there was a workshop in which he taught students the dance and how to play the instruments.

Vrabie said in years past, Multicultural Day has featured a Spanish musical group and a Capoeira instructor, which is a Brazilian dance that combines martial arts and music. "It's all very interactive," she said.

The multicultural trend actually continued all week at Marlborough Elementary School, as the morning greetings were delivered in a different language every day. Vrabie said students delivered the greetings in Spanish, Polish, Ukrainian and Chinese, and Plack, who traveled to Tanzania to work in a program for a month, delivered a greeting in Swahili.

Vrabie picked students who already knew the languages from their own heritage to deliver the morning greetings.

Multicultural Day coincided with the school's monthly Pride Ceremony, which awards student achievements, artwork, student council activities and random acts of kindness. So, although the Multicultural Day events weren't open to the public, parents of students receiving awards were invited. Vrabie said the school's multicultural presentations used to be run by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at night, so parents were able to attend.

Marlborough Elementary School Principal Scott Nierendorf commended Vrabie and Plack for their efforts in organizing Multicultural Day at the Thursday, March 22 Board of Education meeting. "My hat's off [to them] for helping put that together," he said.

But that wasn't all. On Wednesday, March 14, nine students traveled to The Morgan School in Clinton to participate in the 21st annual Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (COLT) Rhyme Celebration for grades pre-kindergarten through six. Thirty-five public and private elementary schools from 11 districts around the state participated this year. Students recited poems chosen by their world language teachers in 15 different languages.

Vrabie, who has been the event's co-chair since 2008, said Marlborough has hosted the Rhyme Celebration in 1993, 1998 and 2008. Marlborough is the only school to have hosted



Nine students from Marlborough Elementary recently attended the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers Rhyme Celebration at the Morgan School in Clinton, where they recited a Spanish poem titled "La Ranita" (The Little Frog). As you can see, some students even dressed the part.

three times and is also the only school to have participated all 21 years.

Vrabie said students from the school's Multicultural Club, a club she and Plack run for third and fourth grade students every other week during recess, volunteered to perform at the Rhyme Celebration. The students practiced on their own time at home and during recess.

Each Rhyme Celebration has a theme, and this year it was "In the Garden." The Marlborough group recited a poem in Spanish

called "La Ranita" (The Little Frog). One student also recited a poem in Polish, which she found and worked on with her parents.

Vrabie said that when Marlborough hosted the Rhyme Celebration in 2008, the theme was "We All Laugh in the Same Language."

After she chose the opening song for the event, she contacted the writer, Les Julian, who came and did a workshop with the students. Julian worked with Marlborough Elementary to write a new theme song for the school.

Prague Meets With Marlborough Dems

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

As a result of a redistricting based on population, Marlborough entered the 19th district Nov. 30 and State Sen. Edith Prague, who represents that district, visited with the Democratic Town Committee Tuesday to introduce herself to the Democrats and speak about her work.

A determination to make changes after a personal loss motivated Prague - who previously worked as a teacher, medical social worker and newspaper columnist - to run for a seat on the House of Representatives in 1982. Prague said she had lost her 21-year-old niece to a drunk driver. "The drunk driver got nothing but a slap on the wrist and a very short-term license suspension," she said. "And I was determined to go to Hartford and put some tough drunk driving laws on the books."

With the help of Republican Chris Shays, Prague said she has done just that. "He worked the Republican side of the aisle and I worked the Democrat side of the aisle and we got the 0.10 [legal blood alcohol content limit] to begin with on the books and, of course, at this point, it's down to 0.08," she said.

Then, Prague said, she toughened the penalties by increasing fines, license suspensions, and pre-trial alcohol education programs.

"I don't know what you have to do to teach people not to drink and drive," she said, noting that just recently, a Yale University graduate student had been killed by a drunk driver with six previous convictions. "No matter how long he goes to jail, you can't bring that life back," she said.

Marlborough Democratic Town Committee Chair Richard Banbury commended Prague's

great reputation and work against drunk driving.

In addition to toughening penalties on drunk drivers, Prague listed labor and the elderly as two of her main interests. Prague, 86, chaired the Labor and Public Employees Committee and the Department on Aging, both of which are now part of the Department of Social Services.

Prague said Republican Ken Frisbee chaired the committee responsible for removing the Department on Aging. "He wouldn't even give me time for an appointment to tell him why he shouldn't destroy the department on aging," she said. "We needed an agency to develop social policy to deal with the inevitable problems that an elderly population was going to bring with it. I was so mad, I decided I was going to run against him in 1994."

Prague won by 18 votes, and has held that Senate seat ever since.

At 86 years old, Prague called herself an "old-timer." "For a while, I toyed with the idea of not running and I thought, 'you know, just because I'm 86 years old why should I hang it up?'" she said. "I make no apologies for older people. I encourage them to do what they want to do."

Prague lost Andover and Bozrah in the redistricting, and now represents Ledyard, Uncasville, Norwich, Lisbon, Sprague, Franklin, Lebanon, Hebron and Marlborough. "I love what I do, I work hard, I'm proud to represent the district and I'm proud now to have Marlborough in my district," she said.

Prague said her Republican opponent in the coming election is retired Naval Officer Steve



State Sen. Edith Prague recently met with members of the Marlborough Democratic Town Committee, as the town will now be included within her district. After she spoke, Prague took time out to speak with Democratic Town Committee members Doug Yeager and John Grasso.

Everett from Columbia. She called him "a decent guy" and said she didn't expect him to be a nasty opponent.

"I'm sure they're going to use [my age] against me, or at least try to, and I think that'll backfire with the senior community," she said.

She also spoke candidly about a health issue she suffered last year. "Last Christmas morning, I had a very minor stroke," she said. "I spent a week at Windham Hospital and a week at the Hospital for Special Care. Really, by the grace of God, I'm okay...I've been back to work for some time."

Hebron Democratic Town Committee Chair Bill Rudis spoke highly of Prague as a representative. "She's an absolutely wonderful representative and believes in the kind of representation that is so important," he said. "I would encourage [the Marlborough Democratic Town Committee] to look at this year as a special year, in the sense not only that you've gained an outstanding state senator in the redistricting, but in the sense of the political condition of not only the town of Marlborough but the state of Connecticut and certainly the nation as a whole."

Marlborough Ed. Board Approves Healthy School Menu

by Katelyn Kelleher

In the middle of National Nutrition Month, the Board of Education discussed modifications to Marlborough Elementary School's cafeteria menu and voted Thursday, March 22, in favor of meeting Healthy Food Certification standards.

Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz called the Healthy Food Certification a "formality" that the school has to do, and, by agreeing the guidelines, the school would be reimbursed 10 cents per meal.

In accordance with a state statute, the certification would ensure all food items offered for sale to students would meet Connecticut Nutrition Standards from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.

It includes all foods sold separately from the reimbursable meals, including school stores, vending machines, the cafeteria and any fundraising events on school premises.

Marlborough Elementary School Principal Scott Nierendorf said he discussed with David Bates, manager and chef at Chartwells, the school's food services provider, an opportunity for parents to monitor the foods their children are purchasing at school.

Through Chartwells, parents could put money on a card for their child to use at school

and, for a small fee, could load their child's account online to view their purchases.

"I'm encouraged by this approach," Nierendorf said. "It would allow parents to decide whether or not they put money on the card, that way they could see what their children have purchased in the system."

Nierendorf said, in the past, the option of an online system for parents to monitor what their children are purchasing was not economical, but this system would be at no cost to the district.

Sklarz discussed changing the names of the school's menu items to make nutritious foods more appetizing for the students. "If they're having whole wheat toast with 2 percent cheese on it, it doesn't sound like a grilled cheese they have at home," he said. "We need to start calling it 'grilled cheese,' but you'll know it's whole wheat and 2 percent cheese."

The board also discussed allowing students to bring their own portable electronic devices (smart phones, e-readers, tablets, etc.) to school. Nierendorf said a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy would allow students to use the devices as educational tools.

Nierendorf said the School Advisory Council, teachers and parents recently had a discus-

sion about how the school can enable students to make use of some of the current technology in their learning. "It's a rapidly growing trend and we want to find a way to make that a part of the curriculum," he said.

Sklarz said technology will be a staple educational tool, just like textbooks, so having a policy is going to get complicated. "The last three years have just come so fast with the use of technology as an instructional tool and certainly here with iPads and Kindle, it's not easy getting to the next stage," he said.

Allowing students to use their electronics in school would not be a cost-saving measure for the school, though. "It's not something that we're approaching to say that the district will no longer have to purchase technology for students because families will be purchasing it," Nierendorf said.

The board discussed a staff vacancy caused by the resignation of teacher Eric Brody, who will take over the position of assistant principal at Hebron Elementary School April 23. Board member Louise Concodello said she doesn't often get the chance to thank faculty who resign or retire for their service at the school and wanted to take the opportunity to thank Brody for his years of service.

Sklarz agreed, and added it would be beneficial that Brody will still be within the district so the elementary schools can coordinate efforts. "It's the consensus of the entire board to send him our best wishes and our sincere gratitude," he said. "Our loss is someone's gain."

Board member Mimi LaPoint asked Sklarz if it was possible to have current faculty absorb the duties of Brody's position in order to avoid eliminating 0.4 student support services and 0.5 curriculum specialist positions that resulted from budget reductions for the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Sklarz said replacing Brody is a decision of the administration, not the Board of Education, but the administration would make every effort to fill the vacant position with a qualified individual within the school's existing staff.

In light of School Board Appreciation Month, Sklarz thanked the Board of Education for their service and announced his plan to make a donation in members' names to the Marlborough Education Foundation.

The Board of Education will hold its next regular meeting Thursday, April 26, at 7 p.m. at Marlborough Elementary School.

Colchester Couple Delivers Bundle of Joy At Home

by Katelyn Kelleher

All the baby books in the world couldn't prepare a Colchester couple for what they didn't expect when they were expecting and were faced with delivering their baby themselves at home.

It was routine when Anna Little went into labor Wednesday, Feb. 22, her anticipated due date. In fact, much of the day was routine while she waited for contractions close enough to go to the hospital. But, when it finally was time, Anna and her husband, Christopher, realized the baby wasn't going to wait.

The contractions began at 10 a.m. and at around 6:30 p.m., Anna called Backus Hospital. The on-call doctor told her to wait until the contractions were five minutes apart and more than a minute long for more than one hour before going to the hospital.

So she waited at home. Anna called her husband to hold her hand during the contractions. "I figured if I was going to be in pain, he could hold my hand through it," she joked.

At 9:15 p.m., her water broke. Anna said her husband was grabbing everything they needed to go to the hospital. She told him to call 911 for an ambulance because she wouldn't make it to the hospital. "I felt the very sudden and urgent need to push," she said.

"My husband was on the phone with a 911

dispatcher who was able to tell [him] what was needed in order...to deliver our son on his own," she said.

The dispatcher told him to have Anna lay on the floor. Christopher put all of their towels around her. "At this point, the baby was crowning and [he] had to catch the baby," she said. "He [was] yelling at me to push and I [was] yelling in pain."

Anna said a "natural" birth was not in the original plan. "I didn't have an epidural and all the lovely modern medicines in a hospital," she said. "It was not the way I had imagined delivering at all, but I wouldn't change a thing. I now know that I am much stronger than I ever thought I was."

After another push, the baby was out, and their newborn son, Christopher, Jr., or CJ, was born at 9:23 p.m.

Two first responders arrived just a minute later. Two state troopers, paramedics and firefighters arrived shortly thereafter. Both Anna and CJ were taken to Backus Hospital.

At 22 inches long and weighing nine pounds, one ounce, CJ, and his mother, were both perfectly healthy. Both were released to go home from the hospital Saturday, Feb. 25.

All told, the labor lasted ten hours and the delivery less than ten minutes.

Anna said she was proud of Christopher, who

was frantic at first, but handled it very well. "He did everything he was told to do," she said. "He was my hero when I really needed him."

Fortunately, for both parents, they had already gone through the childbirth process before. The couple has an older daughter, Bella, who was staying with her grandparents during her baby brother's birth.

Anna wanted to express her family's gratitude to all who helped during CJ's birth, including the Colchester Hayward Fire Department, Middlesex Hospital EMTs and ambulance staff, and the 911 dispatcher. She said the responders helped to calm her and her husband after the chaos.

Anna said the EMTs and the staff at Backus took "fabulous" care of her and her son, and she "couldn't have asked for better."

Despite the chaos of the home birth, the Little's home has returned to normal and baby CJ is already a month old and has adjusted well. "CJ is the completion to our family," Anna said. "He is just perfect."

Anna and Christopher are anticipating the day he is old enough to hear the story about how his father delivered him. "It's a great story we'll be able to tell him when he's older," Anna said. "He'll know how he came charging into this world."



Colchester parents Anna and Christopher Little unexpectedly delivered their son, Christopher Jr., at home Feb. 22.

Memorial Scholarship Honors East Hampton Senior Class

by Joshua Anusewicz

When the Class of 2012 graduates from East Hampton High School this spring, they will do so without at least one classmate that they started with in kindergarten some 12 years ago. But the memory of the classmate, Kelly Coughlin, might just live in the class' memory forever.



Kelly Coughlin

It was almost exactly 12 years ago when Kelly, only five years old and attending Memorial Elementary School, was diagnosed with a blood infection and brought to Connecticut Children's Hospital in Hartford. Just two days later, she was gone.

All these years later, it's still difficult for Kelly's mother, Lori Coughlin, to think about what her family went through in the wake of her daughter's passing. But one more comforting memory is the outpouring of support from

the school staff, classmates' families and other members of the community. One group in particular, which included Kelly's kindergarten teacher Denise Kaczorowski, immediately sought to raise money in memory of Kelly.

"It was shocking," Coughlin said Tuesday "I can't believe all of those people sent this money. Complete strangers were sending hundreds of dollars." Aside from donations, a group of volunteers organized an ice cream social, which drew well over 1,000 people. The initial money raised funded the construction of a playscape at Memorial Elementary School in Kelly's name, which still stands proudly near the classrooms where she once learned.

But following the playscape, a considerable amount of money was still available and the group of fundraisers brainstormed ideas.

The conclusion: a scholarship, which would be given to students in Kelly's class when they graduated high school. Through the initial fundraising and donations made in the name of family members who have passed away, the scholarship totals almost \$15,000.

And according to Coughlin, the scholarship

won't just go to those who excel academically; the questions in the application include, "define what being a good citizen means to you" and "what does empathy mean to you?" Coughlin feels that this offers all students, even those who may not be going on to a four-year college, an opportunity to receive financial assistance.

"We're not looking for anything in particular," Coughlin said of the candidates. "We don't want to leave anyone out. We want everyone to have a chance." She even mentioned the idea of purchasing small gifts for each member of the senior class, just so every student receives something.

East Hampton High School Principal John Fidler said Wednesday that "there are a lot of kids in this class that are worthy" of receiving a portion of the scholarship. And he would know: although he's only been the principal for one year, he served as the principal at East Hampton Middle School prior to that and has seen many of these students grow up, including his own son, who is a member of this year's senior class.

"It's a great group," Fidler said, citing how involved many of the students are in volunteer and charity organizations at the school and in the community. Fidler said that the leadership of the senior class has set a "great school climate" and set an example for the underclassmen to follow as they pass through the school.

It wouldn't be a farfetched to think that Kelly would have been one of those seniors, working beside her classmates to help make her school and her community a better place. Coughlin said that many of her friends have still kept her in mind and have even decided to include her in this year's EHHS yearbook. But through her scholarship, even those who may not have known her as a person will now have the opportunity to remember her forever.

Applications for the Kelly Coughlin Memorial Scholarship are still available in the EHHS guidance office. They must be filled out and returned to the guidance office by Friday, April 13. The scholarship winners will be announced at the senior banquet prior to graduation this spring.

East Hampton BOF Keeps Engineer Position in Budget

by Joshua Anusewicz

After substantial back and forth at last week's budget hearing yielded no changes to Interim Town Manager John Weichsel's proposed budget, the proposal will now go to a public hearing next Monday.

The majority of the meeting focused on Weichsel's addition of a town engineer position to the public works department, a decision that was met with some resistance at last Monday's budget deliberation. Keith Hayden, the town's director of public works, was on hand at the meeting to defend the position, which he said will help the town financially and boost efficiency.

"In a nutshell, I think you're going to save money and provide better services to the taxpayers," said Hayden.

According to Weichsel, the town engineer position, which would include benefits, would pay \$109,000. This cost would be offset by a reduction in the contracted engineering services budget from \$60,000 to \$15,000, as the services of outside engineers would not be needed.

A graph provided by Weichsel indicated that the town has spent an average of \$195,411 in engineering fees per year for the past seven years.

On Monday, Hayden announced that he would also be making a cut to his materials budget of about \$40,000 to help even out the cost of the engineer position.

"We're under-funding [the engineering services]," Hayden said, stating that the cost of the engineering fees has been coming from other funds in recent years. "I'm willing to make the sacrifice to do what we need to do. I'm putting \$40,000 on the table because I believe this is that important to the town."

Hayden added that aside from the savings in engineering fees that would be realized by having its own engineer, the town would also receive better services. Over the past seven years, Hayden said that contracted engineers have averaged roughly 1,100 hours of work at a

higher price. The town engineer, on the other hand, could work around 1,800 hours. That individual, he added, could work closely with public works and the building department, designing and reviewing projects, then overseeing them as well.

The board was hesitant to make any comments on the position at last week's meeting, as a job description had not been provided to all of the members. After reviewing the specifications, the position drew the support of most of the board on Monday, albeit with a good amount of questions.

"I really believe the benefits would be tremendous," said board member Mary Ann Dostaler, who mentioned a list of projects the town faces over the next few years, including a new drainage system at Sears Park and an overhaul of a majority of town roads.

The board also revisited the point that the town had an engineer position several years ago, but scrapped it because the position went unfilled. Some of the board members felt that the town had managed just fine without it.

"Last time, we didn't have a bunch of projects lined up for a few years," objected Vice Chairman Tim Csere.

Chairman Matthew Walton said he saw the benefits of adding the position from a services perspective, but that he didn't see the savings. "We're in a lull right now," Walton said. "People aren't spending money. We're coming out of this recession, and things are changing. Costs are going to go up."

Board member Tom O'Brien also questioned adding a position during uncertain economic times. "Other towns are cutting back services," he said. "Could we look into regionalization? We might get more bang for the buck."

Hayden, however, said he felt the town couldn't take a wait-and-see approach. "The infrastructure of this town is making its own schedule," he said, using the town's roads as the biggest example. "We need to take care of

it."

Looking at the future, board member Ted Turner asked Hayden what he foresees over the next five years in terms of projects throughout the town.

"I see more of the same," Hayden said, listing culverts, bridges, drainage systems and additional roads that will be in need of repair sooner, rather than later.

Board member Patience Anderson admitted that the position looked like it would provide the town with financial savings and service benefits, but expressed some caution. "I'm concerned with making an investment in an employee at this point in time," Anderson said, adding that the board could wait until a new town manager was hired and then revisit the proposal.

After each board member weighed in, Weichsel was asked to give his opinion. "Keith and I have talked at great length about this, and we will save a great deal," he said. "If you look at my track record, I'm not one who asks for employees. My reputation would say quite the contrary."

One thing the board has been disappointed with during the budget process has been the lack of feedback from residents. Although a few more residents were on hand Monday, most of those in attendance were elected officials, who, nevertheless, did give their opinions as citizens.

"I trust an employee who has done a good job," Board of Education Vice Chair Joanne Barmasse said of Hayden. "It looks like the savings will go beyond the area of public works. I fully support this."

Fellow school board member Scott Minnick agreed. "People think, 'What do I get for my tax money?'" Minnick said. "Something like new roads would be tangible evidence. It looks like it would be for a minimal cost at the start, with savings at the end."

After the discussion, the board seemed to be

in agreement that the position was beneficial and should be kept in the budget. But some of the board feared the public might not understand the rationale and feel that the town was unnecessarily adding to the budget during a difficult time.

"If this budget doesn't pass, I'm thinking this is where people are going to look," said Anderson.

Walton agreed. "My fear is that people will see bigger government at a time when we don't need it," he said. "They won't see the nuts and bolts."

Ultimately, the board agreed to keep the proposed budget as is, with the majority agreeing that the budget figures looked good.

"It's a responsible budget," said O'Brien. "There's not a lot of fat to cut, and I think that's why we're having such a difficult time."

The proposed budget - including education, town operations, transfers and debt service - stands at \$39.084 million, up \$1.320 million, or 3.50 percent, from this year's budget. Of the proposed budget, \$27.238 million is for education, up \$1.026 million, or 3.92 percent, from this year, and \$9.557 million for town operations, up \$300,390, or 3.25 percent, from this year.

Despite the increase in the proposed budget, Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said the calculated mill rate is not expected to go up more than one mill; it currently sits at 25.68 and would go up 0.96 mills to 26.64, or 3.74 percent.

This budget will now be sent to a public hearing on Monday, April 2, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School. Both the education and town operations budgets will be presented. The finance board will then hold a meeting on Wednesday, April 4, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton Middle School to officially adopt the budget.

The budget referendum, where residents will vote on the budget, will be held on Tuesday, May 8, at the high school.

Andover Budget Presented with Little Discussion

by Geeta Schrayter

At a public hearing held Wednesday night, the Andover Board of Finance presented a proposed budget for 2012-13 of \$10,568,771 to a room of around 30 residents and town officials with little discussion.

Board of Finance Chairwoman Georgette Conrad stated that this was a \$34,507, or 0.33 percent, reduction over the current year's budget of \$10,603,278.

Conrad noted that even though Andover's levy decreased for RHAM, "there was a substantial increase" for areas such as insurance and funding for oil, gas and utilities. It was also explained a new line item was added for the volunteer fire department for the purchase of protective clothing, which increased the department's expenditures 20.31 percent to \$115,064, up from \$95,639.

Resident and Fire Commission Chair Wally Barton, Jr., explained turnout gear for the firefighters had previously been funded through a federal grant.

"What we're up against now is the first batch [of gear] has come to its 15-year life cycle, so that has to be replaced," Barton said.

Barton went on to say the fire department had considered funding the gear through the capital improvement plan, "but because it was recurring, the recommendation was to make it a line item, so that's the largest chunk."

"Again, it's something that was purchased in the past from federal dollars and that money is

now not out there," he added.

Conrad explained this was "really the only major increase."

Four capital requests had been approved by the board: \$12,000 in repairs to the roof on the old town hall; \$8,500 for a new plow; \$130,000 to refurbish fire truck ET 215 to present-day standards to stretch the useful life of the vehicle for an additional 10-15 years; and \$5,000 for the replacement of 15 pairs of boots for the town's firefighters.

Conrad also explained the impact of revaluation. Since it resulted in a \$20 million drop in the Grand List, it created an automatic 2.2 mill rate increase from 27.55 to 29.80 to maintain the budget "before we even bring in this year's expenses."

For 2012-2013, it was anticipated the mill rate would be 30.80.

"I think the main thing everyone has to understand," said Selectwoman Cathy Desrosiers, is due to revaluation, "we're behind the ball." Desrosiers went on to say that "in order to be even, without any new operational fixtures, costs and expenditures for this year, the mill has to be about 2 [more]."

"The only way to stop that is to cut," she said. "Where do you cut 2 mills?" That cut would equate to about \$520,000.

"That's what you're looking at. I'm just trying to give you a perspective of where we are this year," Desrosiers said.

Conrad also noted that Andover has "not had a mill rate increase in four years."

After Conrad explained the budget, the public had an opportunity to speak, but only one resident took advantage of the opportunity.

Debbie Scanlon stood and expressed concern over the addition of an administrative assistant for the first selectman at a cost of \$6,100.

"I'm still troubled that, as a citizen, we're bringing in an administrative assistant," she said, adding she was confused as to what the reason was for the addition.

Conrad explained the position was 10 hours per week, and the assistant would help the first selectman.

"There is a lot more to being first selectman than there used to be," she said, and the assistant would help with areas such as answering the phones and updating the town website.

"Also," said Desrosiers, "this position would [serve as] clerk for the Board of Selectmen minutes. We have no clerk."

Still, Scanlon noted raises were in place for everyone in town - which she said she agreed with - but she felt the board "should reconsider it and cut it."

"I recommend we keep this position in," Desrosiers countered. "I understand it's not a great budget year to be adding positions but we need to have a clerk on a regular basis. We need to be able to form some type of continuity in

this position," she said.

Desrosiers also mentioned her hope that the position "could provide a little bit of cross training" since the town no longer had an assistant assessor. Emma Sousa, the town's previous assistant assessor, recently took a position in Hebron.

"I think it's the step we need to go, to get to the next level in this community," Desrosiers said.

It was also noted there would be fewer grants available in the upcoming year: \$141,126 compared to \$238,492.

It was also explained raises were necessary due to the fact that there are some union raises in town. "If we don't give raises to non-union workers," said Conrad, "it's not fair."

She added the total increase for the entire town is \$6,500 for all raises, "which is not very big."

After inquiring if anyone else wished to speak and receiving no response, Conrad made a motion to send the budget to the Board of Selectmen for the town meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

No official date for the town meeting has been set, but on Thursday, Selectman Jay Linddy said a motion would be made at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Wednesday, April 4, to hold the meeting on Thursday, May 3.

Court Dismisses Charges Against Burt

Well known real estate broker and landlord Christopher G. Burt, owner of Burt Realty in town, arrested last summer for allegedly impersonating a police officer, has been cleared by the States Attorney's Office of all charges.

Burt was arrested August 9 after East Hampton police received a complaint from a tenant in one of the buildings owned by Burt. The tenant claimed that Burt misrepresented himself as a police officer when trying to get the tenant to respond to the door when Burt went to collect rent.

Burt was charged with impersonating a police officer, which is a class D felony, and dis-

orderly conduct.

Those charges were recently dismissed by Superior Court in Middletown and erased from the online listing of cases and charges.

Burt is well-known in East Hampton and the surrounding area for his commercial real estate ventures and community involvement.

A spokeswoman from Burt's office described the August incident as a "bogus retaliatory arrest" based upon a "one sided statement" from tenants who "forgot to pay the rent" and said the matter has been turned over to a team of litigation attorneys.

Burt could not be reached for comment.

Police News

3/11: Robert A. Maheu, 21, of 81 Main St., Apt. 306, was involved in a one-car motor vehicle accident when he lost control of his vehicle and struck a utility pole. Maheu was arrested for DUI and failure to carry insurance, East Hampton Police said.

3/13: John E. McQuire III, of 64 West High St., Apt. 1, was arrested for DUI, police said.

3/17: Todd Schmidt, 44, of 36 Wildwood Ln. and Jason Prince, 32, of 33 No. Main St., were involved in a two-car motor vehicle accident at Brewer Road and Mott Hill Road. Schmidt re-

ceived a written warning for failure to drive right, police said.

3/19: Boguslaw Mamczynski, 35, of 444 Moodus Rd., was arrested for failure to drive right, traveling unreasonably fast and operating a motor vehicle under the influence, police said.

3/23: Alex Niver, 27, of Riverdale Motel, Room 27, Portland, was arrested for third-degree burglary, third-degree criminal mischief and sixth-degree larceny, police said.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Gustave Walter Marsh

Gustave Walter Marsh, 86, passed away on March 23, 2012. Marsh was born Dec. 27, 1925, raised in East Hampton, and was a member East Hampton High School Class of 1946.

Marsh served as staff sergeant in the Army Air Corps tail gunner for the 98th, and was a proud veteran of World War II. He was also an avid fisherman, golfer, world traveler, and hiker of the Connecticut blue blaze trails.

He is survived by his son Robert Marsh of Hampton and his daughter Nancy Marquis and granddaughter Avery of Germantown, TN. He was predeceased by his sister Mildred Larson and brother Harold Marsh.

The funeral services will be held privately. His remains will be interred at the Veterans Cemetery in Middletown.

Colchester

Maria (Vasquez) Cunningham

Maria Celia (Vasquez) Cunningham, 77, of Colchester, went home to the Lord and her beloved husband, James, on Sunday, March 25, 2012, at the Manchester Memorial Hospital.

She was born in Miles, TX, on February 14, 1935, daughter of the late Filipe and Francisca (Farias) Vasquez. Maria served proudly in the U.S. Air Force where she met the love of her life. Maria and Jim were married on May 2, 1964, in Minot, ND, and shared nearly 44 years of marriage before he predeceased her on April 16, 2008.

Mrs. Cunningham was a registered nurse in the area at a number of facilities including Bacon Academy, University of Connecticut, University of Hartford, Beckett Academy, as well as the O'Brien School in East Hartford, which she retired from in 2005.

She was an active communicant of St. Andrew Parish in Colchester where she was a longtime member of the choir and the Ladies Guild. Over the years, she was also involved with her sons and husband in Cub and Boy Scouts.

She is survived by her three sons, James Michael and wife, Ching Ho, of Santa Clara, CA; Patrick Joseph and his wife, Kate, and their daughter, Cielo, all of Albuquerque, NM; and Joseph Christopher of Norwich; two "adopted" sisters, Rufina Lara of El Paso, TX, and Andrea Aldas of Carlsbad, NM; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her parents and her husband, she was predeceased by two brothers, Ventura and Enrique Vasquez; her adoptive parents, Tomas and Juana Farias, and siblings, Ursulo and Tomasa.

Friends were called yesterday afternoon at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road. The funeral will assemble today, beginning at 10 a.m., at the funeral home before the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy at 11 a.m. at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave. Graveside services with full military honors will be observed Saturday at 1 p.m. at the New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Catholic Charities, 331 Main St., Norwich 06360.

For online condolences, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Robert H. Larson

Robert Henry Larson, 74, of Middletown, formerly of Portland, husband of the late Gertrude (Paganetti) Larson, passed away on Wednesday, March 28, at Water's Edge Center for Health and Rehab.

Born in Portland, he was the son of the late Henry and Doris (Kelly) Larson. Bob lived in Portland most of his life, moving to Middletown in 2001 where he resided with his sister.

He was a veteran serving in the U.S. Navy, worked at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Manufacturing for many years and loved to go to tag sales and antiquing.

Bob is survived by his sister, Donna J. Larson of Middletown; and many nieces and nephews. Along with his wife and parents, he was predeceased by two sisters, Marion Etheridge and Janice Kidd.

A graveside service will be held on Tuesday, April 3 at 1 p.m. in Center Cemetery, Bartlett Street, Portland with the Rev. James R. Reemts officiating. There will be no calling hours. Messages of condolence may be sent to the family at www.doolittlefuneralservice.com. The Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church Street, Middletown is handling the arrangements.

Marlborough

Richard Theodore Couture

Richard Theodore Couture, 64, of Marlborough, the beloved husband of Lile (Stanlick) Couture for 40 years, died Wednesday, March 21, 2012, at home. He was born in Claremont, NH, on October 21, 1947, the son of the late Theodore and Eileen (Carten) Couture.

He graduated from the University of New Hampshire in 1969, where he met Lile Stanlick. He was drafted into the U.S. Army while attending law school at the University of Connecticut. After serving in Germany during the Vietnam War, Richard returned to graduate from UConn Law and to marry Lile on May 6, 1972. He started his career as an attorney for Connecticut Legal Services before going into private practice. He worked for the Connecticut Attorney General's Office from 1978 until 2009, when he retired.

He is survived by his wife Lile, his son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Alison Couture of Glastonbury; his son David Couture of Boston, MA; his daughter Amy Couture of Marlborough; his sister and brother-in-law, Carolyn and Chris Leach of Gales Ferry; his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Sid and Jane Stanlick of New Jersey; his niece Beth Heighter of Gales Ferry; his nephew Steven Heighter of Anaheim, CA; his nephew Samuel Stanlick of New Jersey; his nephew Stephen Stanlick of Massachusetts; and finally, the girl that brought him so much joy for the last year, his granddaughter Charlotte Jane Couture.

Richard was a generous husband, father and friend and will be missed by all who knew him, especially his family who will carry him in their hearts and spirit forever.

A special thanks to his caregivers at the Saint Francis Hospital Cancer Center, Dr. Alessia Donadio, Dr. Joseph Colasanto, and especially his nurse Nella Zydanowicz and the rest of the folks at the Cancer Center who took such good care of him over the past four years.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Monday, March 26, at St. John Fisher Church. Private burial will be at a later date in Marlboro Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to: Masonicare Partners Home Health & Hospice, 111 Founders Plaza, Suite 200 East Hartford, CT 06108 or St. Francis/ Mt. Sinai Regional Cancer Center, 114 Woodland Street, Hartford, CT 06105.

East Hampton

Mildred Sorvillo

Mildred (Cummings) Sorvillo, 80, of East Hampton, beloved wife of the late Joseph Sorvillo, died Tuesday, March 27, at her home, surrounded by her loving children.

Born Aug. 23, 1931 in Barre, VT, she was the daughter of the late John and Nellie (Colombe) Cummings. She had lived in East Hampton for more than 70 years. She was a communicant of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton and a former member of the Moose Lodge in Marlborough.

Mildred was a loving and devoted wife to her husband Joseph for 49 years. She was a loving and caring mother who enjoyed spending time with her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She especially enjoyed her weekend shopping trips and playing cards.

She is survived by her four sons, David J. Sorvillo of East Hampton, Joseph A. III and Marjorie Sorvillo of East Hampton, James N. Sorvillo of Middletown, Gary and Lorraine Sorvillo of East Hampton; her daughter, Loretta "Missy" and Scott Lufbery of East Hampton; two sisters, Helen Haun of Enfield and Ann Blondin of Barre, VT; eight grandchildren, David Sorvillo Jr., Marie (Sorvillo) Sawrun, Keith Sorvillo, Nicholas Sorvillo, Joseph Sorvillo IV, Alyssa Sorvillo, Scott Lufbery Jr. and Emily Lufbery; seven great grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by five brothers and one sister.

Funeral services were scheduled for today (Friday, March 30) at 11 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home 112 Main St., East Hampton with the Rev. Walter Nagle officiating. Burial will follow in Lakeview Cemetery. Calling hours were at the Spencer funeral Home this morning from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions can be made to Middlesex Hospice c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy 55 Crescent St. Middletown, CT 06457. To leave online condolences visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Eva Panek

Eva (Sikora) Panek, 55, of Colchester, beloved wife of Marian Panek, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, March 18. Born in Poland on Dec. 24, 1956, she was the daughter of Sofia Sikora and the late Joseph Sikora of Oliwa, Poland. She spent her childhood and young-adult life in Poland's Tricity region, before emigrating to the U.S. with her husband and their two sons in 1988.

Eva was a kindhearted, hardworking woman who enjoyed going to the casino with friends, taking walks with her dog, knitting and crocheting, gardening and cooking traditional Polish meals. As a long-time custodian for the Colchester Public Schools, Eva helped care for the classrooms and hallways where the town's youngest residents studied and worked. Her generosity and sense of humor will be deeply missed by countless coworkers, friends and family members.

In addition to her husband of 32 years, Eva is survived by two sons, Paul of Mayfield, NY, and Adam of Colchester, her devoted dog, Amora, as well as many extended family members throughout the U.S. and Poland.

The Belmont Funeral Home of Colchester is handling private arrangements.

Portland

Carol R. Sogan

Carol R. Sogan, 72, of Portland, beloved wife of Robert Sogan, died Tuesday, March 27, at the Middlesex Hospital.

Carol was born on Aug. 31, 1939 in Swinden, Willshire, England, daughter of the late Cpl. William Rivers and Barbara Rivers Spellman.

Carol was formerly employed by Atty. Richard Fortuna, the Goodyear Rubber Co. and Middlesex Hospital. She was an avid bingo player at St. Sebastian's Church and Foxwoods Casino.

Besides her husband, she leaves her son, Brett Sogan and his friend, Patty Wright of Cheshire. She will be dearly missed by her sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, Irene and Vincent Tomassetti of Meriden, Shirley and Harry Egan of Portland and Joan Sogan of Avon; her cousins, Margaret Harris and Kath Ellis of England; her nieces, Kara Rice of Cromwell, Kelly Warner of East Hampton; nephew, Scott Egan of Portland; and great-nephews, Kevin and Connor Egan. She was predeceased by her brother-in-law, Donald Sogan of Portland.

The family wishes to thank the Hospital of Central CT, Portland Care and Rehabilitation and Middlesex Hospital for their care and compassion.

Funeral services will be private and at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society 1075 Chase Parkway #1075 Waterbury, CT 06708. To send an online expression of sympathy, please visit www.portlandmemorialfh.net. Portland Funeral Home 231 Main St., Portland, has care of arrangements.

Portland

Elizabeth Condren-Burke

Elizabeth (Sutherland) Condren-Burke, 91, passed away quietly Sunday, March 25, at the Atria Assisted living facility in Rocky Hill. Born in Portage, ME on March 11, 1921, she was the daughter of the late Bertrand Sutherland and Violet Bernard Sutherland.

After graduating from high school in Presque Isle, ME, she moved to Connecticut, working for Southern New England Telephone Co. and Pratt and Whitney. A longtime resident of Connecticut, she lived in East Hartford, Portland, Southington, and New Britain. While living in Southington she was employed by Riccio's clothing store and volunteered at Bradley Memorial Hospital. She was a member of the First Baptist Church of Southington.

She was married for 37 years to James Joseph Condren until his passing in 1984. She remarried in 1993 to Jack Burke of New Britain. She and Jack spent several winters in Mt. Dora, FL until moving to The Villages, FL in 1996 where they enjoyed an active lifestyle until December 2010.

She liked traveling, cooking and spending time with her grandchildren and great grandchild. In Florida, she spent her time doing volunteer work, playing cards, square dancing, playing bocce and golfing.

Besides her parents and her first husband, James J. Condren, Elizabeth was predeceased by four brothers, Averill, Bertrand, Charles and John Sutherland; a sister, Olive Sutherland and half sister, Eunice Davenport. She is survived by her husband, Jack Burke; sister, Molly Carley and her husband Hank of Canaan; Averill's wife, Jean of Manchester and Bertrand's wife, Lyda of Rockville. She is also survived by her four children, Jim Condren and wife Ellen Robinson of Hartford, Bert Condren of Wallingford, John Condren and wife Kim of Southington, and Tom Condren and wife Suzan of New Britain; nine adored grandchildren and one cherished great-grandchild, Nina Rivera and husband Gilbert, and their son Xavier of Wethersfield, Max and Joe Condren of Hartford, Courtney Condren of Meriden, Kelsey Condren of Wallingford, and Jim, Erin, Jake and Meghan Condren of Southington.

Funeral services were scheduled for today (Friday, March 30) at 10 a.m. at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield, with the Reverend George Harris officiating. Burial was to follow in St. Mary's Cemetery, Portland. Calling hours were Thursday evening at the funeral chapel. In lieu of flowers, donations in Elizabeth's memory can be made to the Lupus Foundation of America-CT Chapter (CTLFA), 270 Farmington Ave., Suite 218, Farmington, CT 06032. For online expressions of sympathy to the family, please visit www.desopo.com.

Haddam Neck

Valerie R. Fletcher

Valerie R. Evans Fletcher, 71, of Fayetteville, AR, died Sunday, March 18. She was born Sept. 7, 1940, in Middletown. She grew up in Haddam Neck and graduated from East Hampton High School.

Valerie is survived by her sister, Sydney (William) Mintz of Middlefield; brother, Tim of Lyme; two sons, Ken and wife Mary Maggi of Ohio, and Scott and wife Cathy Maggi of Arkansas; six stepchildren; 28 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; plus several nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts, and uncles. She was predeceased by her parents, Howard Evans and Valerie Wentworth Brown.

She was a registered nurse for 42 years, and worked at Washington Regional Medical Center, Fayetteville, AR until retirement. She then became very active in The First United Methodist Church, working in summer Bible school and singing in the choir for 12 years.

She volunteered as a master gardener, and at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks. She was named the Volunteer of the Year for three consecutive years. Gardening was her love and she was always giving someone a tree or flower.

Valerie was a faithful Christian, friend and confidant. Although our hearts are heavy with grief and sorrow for our loss, angels rejoice, for a bright shining star rises into Heaven. We will miss her many talents, her giving heart, her pink-cheeked smiling face, and her valiant spirit. We will see her again one day.

A memorial service was held on March 23 in Fayetteville, AR. Donations in her memory may be made to Middlefield Federated Church Building Fund, PO Box 200, Middlefield, CT 06455.

