

RIVEREAST

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Russell Schaller of Woodyacres Sugar House in Hebron checks the density of a batch of maple syrup. Schaller expects to make 50 gallons of syrup this season using the sap from his 220 tapped maple trees. Woodyacres will be open to the public during this weekend's Maple Fest.

Syrup in the Air As Maple Fest Returns

by Geeta Schrayter

The air inside Woodyacres Sugar House in Hebron is hot and sweet. Russell Schaller stands beside his evaporator, keeping an eye on the gallons of sap that will soon transform into a pancake's best friend – pure maple syrup.

It's a process that takes hours of constant attention. The cold, clear sap, which has only a one-to-three percent sugar content when it comes out of the tree, will have the water boiled off until the content is much higher.

"That's all you're doing is taking off the water – we don't add anything to the maple syrup," Schaller said.

The sugar content won't reach 100 percent, said Schaller, but it's high – "one gallon of maple syrup weighs 11 pounds. Eight pounds is sugar," he said, adding "that's why you can take a glass jar, put it in the freezer and it won't freeze solid."

To get to that point, Schaller explained it takes time.

"When I first start off with a fresh batch of sap, it takes me five hours" to make the syrup, Schaller said. "Then after that, this evaporator can boil just about 50 gallons of water away in an hour, so I can make about one gallon an hour as long as you keep on it."

Keeping on it involves monitoring the evaporator and the sap, keeping the fire blazing and the water boiling.

His wife Denise explained Schaller has been making maple syrup for over 30 years – even before they built their sugar house in 1988. It's something he loves to do, she said, which is helpful considering "some nights he's out here boiling all night."

Along with enjoying the process, Schaller likes the product, too.

"He has it on everything – ice cream, half a grapefruit, acorn squash, toast, tea – he just uses it on everything," she said.

Schaller stated that this year, the sap started flowing a few weeks earlier. But with 220 tapped maple trees, he said he hopes to get about 50 gallons of maple syrup.

That syrup will be bottled and sold to those who enjoy the real thing over a bottle of Aunt Jemima, like Schaller does, at this weekend's 22nd annual Hebron Maple Festival.

Woodyacres Sugar House will be one of four sugar houses participating in this year's event along with Wenzel Sugar House, Pierce's Sugar House and Winding Brook Sugar House. The first three will be open for guests to take a tour and learn how the sweet amber liquid is made before purchasing a bottle of their own.

Then, there will be a plethora of activities all throughout town for those who enjoy maple syrup – or an excuse to spend the day outside – to enjoy.

The festival, which takes place this Saturday, March 10, and Sunday, March 11, will kick off with an opening ceremony on Saturday, and a pancake breakfast both days.

Visitors will have the opportunity to attend a craft fair at Gilead Church, a silent auction at Hebron Center Nursery School and the annual quilt show at the Hebron Historical Society.

They can tour the town's historic churches, one-room school houses, nearby Hills Farm and see a demonstration of a Revolutionary War en-

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Marlborough School Board Adopts Budget

by Katelyn Kelleher

After considering additional savings, the Marlborough Board of Education voted 4-2 to add one paraprofessional position and one half of a custodial position back to the proposed budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year last Thursday, March 1.

Spanish, however, stayed out of the \$7.20 million spending plan, which is a 2.91 percent increase over current year spending.

At last week's meeting, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz presented an addendum to his original budget proposal, with \$26,500 in additional reductions based on projected lower costs in health insurance, computer and network services and propane, as well as cuts to dues and fees and meetings and conferences. The reductions brought the proposed budget from a 3.28 to a 2.91 percent increase over the 2011-12 fiscal year budget.

Sklarz said health insurance was an obvious budget to reduce by \$8,000, as rates have come down. He said the budget was overly cautious with computer and network services so it was reduced by \$15,000, and propane cost averages have been slightly lower than projected so it

was reduced by \$1,000. Sklarz reduced \$1,000 based on fees and dues not used over the last several years, and said the additional \$1,500 savings would come from limiting meetings and conferences.

Putting back the paraprofessional and custodian positions added \$31,320 back, \$4,820 over the original budget proposal. The bottom line for the adopted budget, which the Board of Education will present to the Board of Finance, is \$7,200,060.

Sklarz said he is optimistic the insurance costs will come down an additional one percent, covering the additional \$4,820 for the paraprofessional and custodian positions.

Board member Shannon Bielaczyc said she was concerned with the new number. "Two weeks ago [at the last Board of Education meeting], there were probably five of us that said 'I'm okay with 3.28 and I don't want to see it go any lower,' and a few of us weren't even okay with 3.28. Now I come back and find out that we're at 2.91," she said.

Board member Mimi LaPoint said the board, as a whole, did not ask for a budget proposal

of less than 3 percent.

"I'm a little distressed," she said. "If these cuts that you are currently presenting are real true savings that you are finding, I would prefer to say let's take that money to see what we can put back in. For example, another [paraprofessional]."

Sklarz recommended first adding in the half custodian position, then a paraprofessional. "Not one position reduced was easy," he said.

Resident Rich Storrs spoke in favor of adding paraprofessionals back into the budget. He said cutting paraprofessionals would be a disservice to the school.

Resident Kristine Friend said she was surprised that the board arrived at such an abrupt decision on the budget.

"I feel like a lot of things were not discussed," she said.

Around 30 residents attended the meeting, many of them in support of the Spanish program. The board voted to cut the program at its Feb. 16 meeting, resulting in an \$80,000 savings in the budget.

Kristen Vrabie, Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall

Elementary School's Spanish teacher, asked the board to issue a public apology "for slandering the program and [her] by association."

At previous meetings, board members cited the poor quality of the Spanish program as reasoning for the cut, adding it would be reinstated when the town had money to properly support the program.

RHAM Middle School language teacher Valerie Schaus also attended the meeting to dispute claims that the cultural aspect of the language program was not necessary.

Resident Kate Stephenson told the board they should be ashamed of themselves for their decision to cut the Spanish program, and read a letter from her fourth-grade son, Tyler, expressing his support for the program and his teacher.

Storrs said a recent issue of *Connecticut Magazine* ranked Marlborough number one among its size; however, education did not improve, the magazine wrote.

The article read, "Marlborough's leap from number 16 two years ago to number one this

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At Woodyacres Sugar House on Wednesday, Russell Schaller was preparing for this weekend's Maple Festival by boiling sap to make maple syrup. The process, which takes hours, requires his constant attention: he needs to monitor the evaporator and the sap, keep the fire hot and the water boiling.

Maple Fest cont. from Front Page
campment.

Also taking place is the Birds of Prey Exhibition, an educational program produced by Wingmasters, a Massachusetts non-profit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding and appreciation of North American birds of prey.

Then, a scavenger hunt, face painting and an ice cream-eating contest help make certain there's something for everyone.

And while guests are walking around exploring the town, there'll be plenty of culinary delights to ensure no one goes hungry; from Girl Scout Cookies, brownies and fried dough to chili, burgers and homemade soups.

Of course, the Maple Fest wouldn't be complete without a variety of all-things syrup related, too. Icy maple milk can be found at Old Town Hall, while sugar on snow, maple cotton candy and homemade maple cookies can be enjoyed at the Fire House. Grilled maple, ham and cheese sandwiches can be found on Main Street along with maple and chocolate covered pretzels. Homemade maple cake with ice cream can be enjoyed at Wenzel's Sugar House while visitors see The Farmer's Cow, and homemade maple glazed walnuts can be purchased at Woodyacres.

And finally, if after enjoying a day saturated with the sugary substance a visitor decides they want to start making syrup for themselves, they can learn about "Getting Started in Backyard



Sugaring" at 27 Main St.

For information on the Maple Festival, visit hebronmaplefest.com.

Adopts Budget cont. from Front Page

time is remarkable. The town enjoyed improvements in all categories except education, but even that remained solid."

"That is true, for now," Storrs said of the education reference. "However, that builds a reputation for people to move into town and set up businesses. It takes time for those cuts to have an impact on reputation, but it takes even more time to rebuild a reputation."

LaPoint said the idea that education is not improving in Marlborough is hurting the town.

"Education is what our town has. It's what brings families to our town, what makes our houses worth more money...If everything is improving except for our education then we are hurting our town," she said. "We've been saying for a couple of years 'eventually we're going to have to put this stuff back in.' Well even-

tually is now. We need to stop cutting."

Selectman Dick Shea refuted the idea of making decisions based on the article. "I haven't seen any indication of scores slipping," he said. "I hope nobody here thinks *Connecticut Magazine* pours hundreds of hours of research into this."

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom also encouraged the board and residents not to put too much emphasis on the article.

"When people are looking to move to a town, taxes on property are also a factor [in addition to the school system]," he said. "We have to make it so people can afford to live here."

The Board of Education will present the adopted budget to the Board of Finance March 14.

Residents Concerned by School Paper Shortage

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

A paper shortage at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School last week caused school officials to consider new methods of paper conservation.

Residents expressed concern over the recent paper shortage at last Thursday's Board of Education meeting. Principal Scott Neirendorf said the school had to place an order for paper earlier than expected, but the school has since been restocked.

"We had budgeted for a certain amount of paper for the year, and we went through that much more quickly than expected the last few months," he said. "From December to January, our usage was well above what we expected, so then our order for getting paper we hadn't planned to make yet."

Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz stressed the shortage was not a budget issue.

"We budgeted enough for the same amount of paper that was budgeted in the past, so it wasn't that we ran out of money, we just ran out of paper," he said. "As soon as we realized that, we ordered the paper immediately."

Neirendorf said teachers had to get creative during the past few weeks, using full pages split into several sections for assignments.

Even though the paper is back, Neirendorf said the school has put in place conservation systems to prevent a future shortage.

"Currently the newsletter is distributed electronically," he said. "Households had the option of receiving a paper version, and approximately 80 to 90 families opted for [the

paper version]."

In an effort to reduce printed material, for the next few months the school will offer the newsletter electronically only. Neirendorf said the change is not permanent yet, and certain material, such as the school calendar, will still be printed.

"It used to be custodians would bring paper to the paper areas whenever it was needed," he said. "We set up a system so we will notify the teachers."

Sklarz and Neirendorf attributed the shortage to the school's efforts to save money by printing sections of consumable workbooks instead of the books themselves.

"This is not unique to Marlborough," he said. "For example, at one point we might have purchased a spelling workbook, but now teachers will print out sections."

"If we're not buying new books then people are printing more and copying more and doing more assignments on that. It's all paper," Sklarz said.

The school works with publishers to tend to copyright issues, but overall it is cheaper for the school to purchase the rights to a book and print it than purchase many of the books themselves, Neirendorf said.

Sklarz emphasized again the budget wasn't the issue here, nor will it be in the future.

"We never want to get to the point where we don't have any more paper because we're out of money," he said. "It certainly wasn't the issue here and my caution would be that we're never going to get to that."

Phelps to Challenge Carpino for State Rep Seat

by **Joshua Anusewicz**

After a few weeks of rumors, Board of Education Chairman Christopher Phelps confirmed this week that he would be running for state representative of the 32nd General Assembly District in November.

Phelps, a Democrat, will look to unseat incumbent State Rep. Christie Carpino, who is in her first term. Carpino is expected to run for re-election, although she has made no official announcement that she would do so. She won the seat, which serves Cromwell, Portland and a portion of Middletown, in 2010 by defeating Democratic incumbent James O'Rourke.

Since 2003, Phelps has served on the Board of Education - making him the longest serving member of the board - and has been the chairman for the last four years. Professionally, he has worked as a consumer and environmental advocate in Hartford for a number of years, protecting residents against identity theft and bad loans, and has supported efforts to shift from fossil fuels to more efficient forms of energy.

Phelps said he began looking into running at the state level earlier this year, and added that he was "encouraged" by the response the idea got from those he spoke with.

"This is the right time," Phelps said. "We have some big challenges ahead."

Most of the challenges that Phelps mentioned are well-known - improving education, the economy, creating jobs and rebuilding the middle class. Phelps said he feels that, while many have failed in making these things happen, he provides the experience to make marked improvement.

"In Hartford, I've seen people unwilling to move across party lines, and things stall," he said. "On the Board of Education, we've worked across party lines to get things done."

And, as Phelps put it, "the proof is right there" that being bipartisan works. Portland schools have seen a dramatic increase in test scores across the district - now some of the highest in the state - and a rise in the number of students attending four-year colleges.

This has all been done, Phelps said, despite fiscal challenges. "We've been able to hit the brakes on spending without having to cut, and have instead added classes and programs," he said. "We've made sure our teachers have the resources to do the best job possible." As an example, Phelps cited Brownstone Intermediate School being named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the Department of Education last year.

Having success at the town level on the

school board, Phelps said he felt that running for state representative was "the logical next step" in his public service career.

"This is what I'm passionate about," he stated. "I want to stand up for our families, neighbors, our town, and the entire district. This should be a government that works for the people."

Phelps added that Republicans at the state level have "just said 'no'" rather than "work towards a positive solution" to the state's problems.

"It's the nature of partisan politics," he admitted.

Since he made the decision to run, Phelps said he has had a positive response from residents of both Portland and Cromwell, who he said want "someone to stand up and fight for their community in Hartford." Phelps said he's also been encouraged by local leaders to run, like First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield.

Over the next several months, Phelps said he will be forming his campaign committee and begin going door-to-door to speak with voters. He said he will also be seeking volunteers from throughout the district to work on his campaign, and more information on how to get involved will be available soon.



Board of Education Chairman Christopher Phelps will be running for state representative in November.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Next Tuesday is referendum day in Andover. Residents will vote on whether to pass proposed revisions to the town charter. As readers of the *Rivereast* have no doubt noticed lately, the referendum is certainly not without controversy. I would venture to guess I've gotten more letters to the editor from Andover readers in the past three weeks than I normally get in three months.

Many of the letters have been encouraging residents to vote down the question asking whether the Board of Selectmen should have the authority to "enact, amend or repeal any ordinance," subject to the right of voters to petition any such action to referendum.

As it stands now, the charter gives the selectmen the authority to "enact, amend or repeal minor ordinances." No clear definition of "minor" is given – which is something of a problem in itself, as one person's minor could be another one's major – but still, the absence of the word from the proposed revision appears to have given some concern that the Board of Selectmen will begin enacting ordinances left and right, and it'll be the beginning of the end of democracy as we know it in Andover.

I don't know if I'd go that far. The proposed charter would still allow people to petition any ordinances they desired to town meeting if they so desired. A relatively low number of signatures would be required for a successful petition – just 2 percent of registered voters – and, if these past few weeks of letters have been any indication, Andover residents have no problem mobilizing behind a cause they feel passionately about.

That said, I do think the word "minor" should have been a part of the ordinance question – along with a definition of the word, so as not to make it sound so subjective.

Some letter writers have also been encouraging residents to shoot down the proposed charter change that would move town elections from May to November. But I like this revision. Andover is one of just five towns in the state that still hold their elections in May. Some in town seem to be worried that, if Andover's elections moved to November, coverage of the races would get lost amid all of the other races being covered in the news at that time.

I just don't feel that would be the case. I can't speak for other newspapers, but here at the *Rivereast*, we cover five towns that *do* hold elections in November, and I'd have to say our coverage of those races is pretty darn comprehensive, for all of the towns. And I've yet to hear a single complaint from, say, Hebron residents saying they can't find their election stories due to all the East Hampton election coverage.

Plus, if other towns felt they were getting lost in the shuffle of fall election coverage, then you'd probably see more towns still holding their elections in May, not less. Like I said, there are only five towns in the state with May elections, meaning 164 other ones are fine with November.

Also, Election Day, to be honest, just feels better – more natural – in November. You're already in the voting frame of mind. I've only been voting every year for the past 10 years or so (I was your prototypical lazy college kid who didn't want to fiddle with absentee ballots), but it's so engrained on me that it

would frankly seem weird to *not* find myself at my Manchester polling location the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, casting a ballot.

For most of us, elections are an autumnal affair. I think it's time they should be in Andover as well.

* * *

TV Trivia Question: What is the only show to have its series premiere – not season premiere, but the very first episode of the series – capture the top spot in the Nielsen ratings the week it aired?

* * *

Even for a bona fide food junkie like myself, this is just too much. I read over the week-end McDonald's in Austria is now offering the "McRibster." It's the McRib – that famous (infamous?) boneless pork meat patty that McDonald's trucks out only sporadically, just when your arteries think they're in the clear – but deep-fried, with bacon and pepper jack cheese on top. But wait, there's more: it also comes with *two* sauces – a sweet chili sauce and a honey mustard one – and, for the health-conscious, lettuce and red onion.

Now, there's a certain slimy-but-satisfying appeal to the original McRib. It's certainly a sandwich that you should only have once each time Mickey D's rolls it out (I've found the novelty is decidedly gone by the time you have a second one, leaving you with just a sandwich you feel rather gross for eating), but still, it has its charm. But there's nothing enticing about deep-frying that sucker and covering it in bacon and cheese. I don't think I'd be able to get past the thought of how horrible that would be for me. (Somewhat remarkably, the sandwich is listed at only 660 calories – but with the words "deep-fried," "bacon" and "cheese" thrown in, I'd have to assume the fat, cholesterol and sodium levels would be rather high.)

But if you need to try one for yourself – I won't judge you – it's only available for a limited time, until March 27. So best book those plane tickets now.

* * *

Here's a little dose of word humor for you: An MIT linguistics professor was lecturing his class the other day. "In English," he said, "a double negative forms a positive. However, in some languages, such as Russian, a double negative remains a negative. But there isn't a single language, not one, in which a double positive can express a negative."

A voice from the back of the room piped up, "Yeah, right."

* * *

TV Trivia Answer: *Rhoda*. The *Mary Tyler Moore* spinoff was the top-rated show in the land when it debuted on Sept. 9, 1974, besting even perennial ratings winner *Monday Night Football*. The sitcom continued to perform quite solidly for a while – the first-season episode wherein the title character got married was the top-rated television episode of the 1970s until *Roots* came along in 1977 – but ratings dropped like a stone in the show's third year, after the producers decided to split up Rhoda and her husband Joe, and the series was ultimately canceled midway through its fifth season.

* * *

See you next week – and don't forget to go to the Hebron Maple Festival this weekend!

Public Hearing Scheduled for Proposed Portland Blight Ordinance

by Joshua Anusewicz

On Wednesday, the Board of Selectmen approved a public hearing for residents to discuss a proposed blight and nuisance ordinance that was recently drafted by the board's property maintenance subcommittee.

The public hearing has been scheduled for Wednesday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m. at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

The subcommittee, consisting of First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and selectmen Fred Knous and Ryan Curley, drafted the ordinance based upon similar documents from Windsor Locks and Bristol. The ordinance would be used as a tool to deal with unsightly, dilapidated or abandoned property in town.

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

According to the draft ordinance, the purpose of the document is "to define, prohibit and abate blights and nuisances and to protect, preserve and promote public health, safety, and welfare; and to preserve and protect property values."

In the ordinance, "blight" would include dilapidated structures, fire hazards, health risks, properties not being maintained and properties creating a substantial interference. Exemptions would include municipal properties and buildings undergoing repair or restoration, provided that the blighted condition does not exceed six straight months.

The nuisance portion of the ordinance adds that "no person, firm, corporation, or other legal entity shall cause or allow any blighted premises...to be created or continued on any

real property located within the Town of Portland."

The ordinance would allow residents to submit a formal complaint to the first selectwoman and, if the property was deemed to be blighted, the individual would be notified of the violation and be given a specified date to comply with the ordinance. The individual would also have the opportunity to appeal the ruling within 10 days of the notice being sent. If the individual does not comply, they would be subjected to possible fines of \$100.

Knous said Thursday that the ordinance is "not cast in stone," and will most likely be tinkered with following more discussion. He also pointed out the issue of unregistered vehicles on properties and the challenge of "crafting language" that will allow for a distinction between vehicles being restored and abandoned vehicles that have become an eyesore.

"We don't want to punish someone who has an unregistered vehicle in their driveway or garage that they are maintaining," he added.

As for feedback, Knous is hopeful that "a reasonable number of residents" will attend the public hearing to learn more about the proposal and provide suggestions. He said that many of the concerns he has heard regarding blight are in regards to commercial properties in town, and the town currently has "no tools" to enforce a possible blight situation.

"We need something that has teeth to get that accomplished," Knous said. "We need to get something on the books that's reasonable, and I believe that most will be willing to correct the situation to avoid any possible penalties."

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 21, at 7:30 p.m., at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

Charter Referendum Next Week in Andover

by Geeta Schrayter

Over the past couple of weeks, the letters section of the *Rivereast* has been flooded with Andover residents voicing their thoughts on the proposed town charter.

Now, each side will have the opportunity to support their views – and vote for or against the revised charter during the town referendum this Tuesday, March 13.

There will be three ballot questions to answer regarding the charter, the first of which is related to town elections. Voters will be asked whether the biennial municipal elections, currently held in May, should instead be held in November.

The second question asks whether the Board of Selectmen should have the authorization to "enact, amend or repeal any ordinance, subject to the right of the voters to petition any such action to referendum, as rec-

ommended by the Charter Revision Commission."

The third ballot question addresses the revised document as a whole and states "shall the additional revisions of the Charter recommended by the Charter Revision Commission be adopted, including streamlining and plainer language of the Charter?"

Per state statute, a majority of the town's voters need to approve the changes to the charter, "provided such majority shall be no less than 15 percent of the electors as determined by the last completed registry list of such town."

The referendum will take place in the Community Room at Town Hall, 17 School Rd. The polls will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., and absentee ballots are available in the town clerk's office.

Small Crowd for Public Hearing on Portland Budget

by Joshua Anusewicz

Those who witnessed a stream of cars flowing into the Portland High School parking lot on Tuesday night may have been fooled into thinking there was a large turnout for the town's public hearing on the budget.

While the majority of vehicles were there for a meeting on the school play, a small group made up of mostly town officials, employees and commission members were presented with the proposed budget figures for the upcoming fiscal year.

As reported in last week's *Rivereast*, the proposed town budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year is \$30.51 million, a 2.34 percent increase from the current fiscal year. The general government budget would account for \$12.06 million, up from \$11.73 million, or 2.88 percent, this year, and the education budget would account for \$18.45 million, up from \$18.10 million, or 1.98 percent, from last year.

According to First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, who presented her budget to open the public hearing, the mill rate would have to be raised .06 mills from last year to account for the amount of spending. However, because of this past year's revaluation process, the mill rate would have to be increased by 2.02 mills to offset the 8.4 percent decrease in real estate values and maintain the same level of revenue. This would increase the mill rate to 30.77.

Bransfield called the 6.7 percent decrease in the town's Grand List because of the revaluation an "unusual circumstance." The Grand List

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

But Bransfield pointed out that because property values are down, a house that would be valued at \$200,000 is actually considered to be valued at about \$183,200 after revaluation. Because the property value is down, Bransfield stated that a home actually valued at \$183,200, with a mill rate of 30.77, would only have to pay \$7 more in taxes than last year, at \$5,637. In contrast, Bransfield added that if your property value went up, you could very well be paying more in taxes.

Bransfield outlined where most of the budget increase is coming from, highlighting an increase in the cost of municipal property insurance due to damage from last year's storms, as well as a bump in the capital improvement budget to cover projects at the senior center, the high school and the town's computer system. Also included is a new K-9 sport utility vehicle for the police department. (The vehicle

that is currently being used in that capacity will then be used by the public works department and the current public works vehicle is expected to be sold.)

An important highlight of the budget was that health insurance premiums did not increase, Bransfield said, a factor that has plagued budgets in other towns. She also added that the cost of health insurance could actually decrease during budget deliberations over the next month, bringing the total budget figure down.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sally Doyen was also on hand, to present the Board of Education budget. The education budget represents the first proposed increase in three years; Doyen said that in two of the last three years, the Board of Education has approved a zero percent increase, but a lack of federal funding used primarily for staffing would not be available this year.

Doyen said the amount of funds lost will amount to about \$248,000. Even though the funds, which were supplied through federal grants, will not be available, the board made its biggest priority maintaining the levels of staffing and programs.

"There was some trepidation, but we were able to do it," she stated.

As for the items driving the increase, Doyen highlighted improved technology, tuition for out-of-district students for children with special needs, and an architect to assist the board

in its ongoing Town Facilities Study.

Just one resident spoke up with a concern about the budget. Susan Young, who stated that she lives on Main Street, informed Bransfield that the revaluation showed the value of her property increasing by about \$50,000. Through speaking with other residents in her neighborhood, Young said that many of them are in the same situation and are concerned that they will be shouldered with more taxes than other residents in town.

"I don't think it's fair," Young said. "People should be aware that some of us will be carrying an unfair burden."

Bransfield informed Young that the values of the properties are determined by a third-party revaluation company, and that residents can argue the value of their property through the town's Board of Assessment Appeals.

Over the next month, the Board of Selectmen will hold department budget workshops at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave. The dates for the workshops will be: Tuesday, March 13; Wednesday, March 14; Tuesday, March 20; and Wednesday, March 21. All of the workshops will be at 7 p.m.

Following the workshops, the selectmen will hold two days of budget deliberations, Tuesday, March 27, and Wednesday, March 28, both at the library at 7 p.m. The selectmen will then formally adopt the budget on Wednesday, April 4, at the library at 7 p.m.

\$4.47 Million Operations Budget Sent to Marlborough Finance Board

by Katelyn Kelleher

The Board of Selectmen adopted a \$4.47 million town operations budget for the 2012-13 year at its Tuesday meeting, and sent the package to the Board of Finance for approval.

Also Tuesday, the selectmen discussed the possibility the town's mill rate may increase sharply, as a result of the revaluation and Grand List decrease.

The proposed spending plan calls for a 2.26 percent increase over the current year's town operations budget. Changes included an increase in the tax collector's salary, a reduction in health insurance costs and a change in parks and recreations facilities operations. In total, the budget increased by \$98,682, leaving the final town operations total at \$4.47 million.

First Selectman Catherine Gaudinski said insurance decreased because the town made a commitment to move long-term disability and life insurance to Anthem.

She also said a health insurance subcommittee between three towns (Hebron, Andover and Marlborough) and four Boards of Education (Hebron, Andover, Marlborough and Colchester) has been discussing the possibility of self-insuring.

"Towns possibly doing self-funding [will begin] this July for the upcoming year," Gaudinski said. "I don't know if it will come to fruition for this July, but it's on the radar screen."

Tax Collector Barbara Murray's salary increased 3.5 percent, as opposed to other full-time positions' 1.5 percent increase. The difference is an additional \$745. Gaudinski said she suggested the increase because Murray's office has taken on additional work, including billing Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) accounts twice annually and working with the town planner to adjust accounts. She also said part of the increase is reimbursed by the WPCA.

Although the parks and recreation facilities operations budget remained the same at \$12,764, Gaudinski proposed to switch to Olsen Sanitation, a state contractor for portable toilets in town parks. "The difference in price is \$3,600 and it's \$15 for an additional visit for service, so instead of reducing the facility operations by [\$3,600] I kept it level for the requests," she said.

Parks and Recreation Commission Chair Barabara Lazzari asked the selectmen to look into it further, as Olsen Sanitation does not remove the trash from the portable toilets, which could cause a health issue in the parks.

The board also voted to recommend \$20,000 in contingency, \$130,269 for capital and non-recurring expenditures, and \$2.48 million for town debt to the Board of Finance. Including spending for the local and RHAM school boards, the total expenditures for the recommended 2012-13 fiscal year budget

came to \$21.63 million, an overall 2.20 percent increase from current year spending. The budget will be presented to the Board of Finance March 14. Following the Board of Finance's approval, the budget would then go to public hearing, which Gaudinski said will tentatively take place April 23, and then ultimately go up for vote at a town meeting May 14.

* * *

Gaudinski said, in light of the 10 percent decrease the town saw on its 2011 Grand List, the mill rate is estimated at 31.21, a 4.01 mill increase over the 27.20 rate for the current year. A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. So, under the estimated mill rate, a person with a house assessed at \$200,000 would pay \$6,242 in taxes on it, up from the \$5,440 that person is currently paying.

"It represents a 14.75 percent tax increase, but that's due to the reduced values," she said. "If we didn't have a revaluation and our Grand List stayed flat, our mill rate would have been 28.15, so it would have gone up 0.95 mills, which represents a 3.49 percent tax increase to the property owner."

"Unfortunately we're getting hit with the reduced value of the market," she said. "We're not alone."

* * *

The selectmen also Tuesday voted in favor

of Gaudinski's recommendation to make a shared purchase with Columbia and possibly another town for used screener equipment. Gaudinski explained the equipment is used during road construction to fill in soil, and is something the town currently contracts out.

"It's something that we use often and something that we could use in-house," she said.

Marlborough's share of the equipment is \$9,700, which Gaudinski said the town has in the budget for road maintenance materials.

* * *

Gaudinski also notified the board of Connecticut Water and a developer's interest in test-drilling for water amounts near Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School with the possibility of creating another water system for a housing development near the center of town. The company would look at the number of gallons per minute that can be extracted.

Gaudinski said, depending on the results of the test-drilling, it might be beneficial to some businesses in the center of town with water issues, as they could "tie in" to the new well.

"But this is all long down the road. This would require town meetings and there's a whole process," she said.

The board also Tuesday voted to accept the resignations of WPCA alternate David Morganson and the clerical assistant in the town treasurer's department.

East Hampton Drama Club to Explore ‘Effect of Gamma Rays’

by Joshua Anusewicz

Ever since Mark O’Donnell first saw the play *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds* in 1975, it has been one of his favorites. As the drama director at East Hampton High School, he has always wanted to recreate the piece, hopefully with experienced girls to fill the all-female cast.

This year, the stars aligned. With all of the pieces in place, the East Hampton High School Drama Club will perform the play this weekend, March 9 and 10.

“I’m ecstatic about the show,” O’Donnell said Tuesday. He added that he’s seen it performed multiple times, at multiple levels of theater, and has “always wanted to do it.”

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds is a 1964 Pulitzer Prize-winning play written by Paul Zindel. The plot focuses on a dysfunctional family of three: a mother, Beatrice, and two daughters, Ruth and Tillie. Beatrice is the main antagonist, as she is verbally abusive to her daughters due to unfortunate events that have occurred in her life. Ruth is Tillie’s older sister, is unpopular and confused, and suffers from epilepsy. Tillie is the main character of the play; she is intelligent, but is often bullied by her family and other kids at the school.

In the play, Tillie is performing an experiment for the school’s science fair where she exposes marigolds to radioactivity to show it effects their growth. While she works on her project, she is constantly put down by her family. The focus is put on how each character handles this situation, culminating in a dramatic ending.

“The characters are complex,” O’Donnell said. “It’s easy to dislike the characters, but there’s something underneath that makes you want to forgive them.” He added that the show

“challenges the audience to see how deep your sympathy will go.”

And the students involved in the production admit that it’s a challenging and unique play. “It’s different from anything you’ve seen before,” said senior Emily Claffey, who works as the props manager.

Needing a mature female cast, O’Donnell said he “couldn’t be happier” that he was able to cast three seniors to help with the “intimacy of the play.” Playing the role of Tillie will be Victoria Johnson; the role of Ruth will be played by Molly Bibisi; and the role of Beatrice will be played by Allyson Dainiak. And because of the small cast, much of the dialogue is driven from the three main characters, presenting a considerable challenge.

“I was nervous at first because of all of the lines,” Victoria admitted. “But it’s not as scary as I thought it would be.”

Allyson, who has been a member of the Drama Club for three years, admitted it was “scary” to be cast in her largest role yet, but added that having longer segments of dialogue actually made the speaking parts a little easier.

“With the larger lines, you don’t have to worry about the cues as much,” she said.

Having been practicing three times a week since January, this week marks what the girls labeled “Hell Week,” which means all hands on deck to prepare for the shows. The sets and props are currently being finalized, lines are being memorized, and the final touches will be put on at dress rehearsal this week.

“You’re nervous for the rehearsal because it’s the first time performing [the play] in front of an audience,” said Allyson. “But once that’s out of the way, everything is much easier.”

It’s fitting that this play was chosen this year – a play O’Donnell has always wanted to put



Seniors Allyson Dainiak, left, and Victoria Johnson play leading roles in the East Hampton High School Drama Club’s upcoming production of *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds*. Victoria will play Tillie, a bright but bullied girl in the midst of a science project, and Allyson will play Beatrice, Tillie’s verbally abusive mother. Photo by Mark O’Donnell.

on – because this will be O’Donnell’s final production as drama director at East Hampton High School. O’Donnell, who will continue his role as an English teacher at the school, has decided to step down from the position after this year. And if you speak with the cast and crew, many will tell you that his absence will be difficult to handle, but that they are happy they could send him off in style.

“It’s really sad,” Victoria said of O’Donnell’s departure. “I wouldn’t have joined [the drama club] if I didn’t have him as a teacher. I came

out of my shell here; we’re all friends here, and there are only a few places that happens.”

“It has brought a lot of different people together that you wouldn’t normally have a chance to meet,” said Emily.

The show will be performed twice this weekend, today, March 9, and tomorrow, March 10, with both performances beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the East Hampton High School auditorium, 15 North Maple St. Tickets will be \$5 for adults and \$3 for seniors; the play is recommended for those of at least high school age.

Hamm Retiring After Seven Terms

by Joshua Anusewicz

According to a March 2 press release from the Connecticut General Assembly, state Rep. Gail Hamm will not seek re-election following the completion of her seventh term at the end of this year.

Hamm, a Democrat from East Hampton, was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1998, serving the state’s 34th House District for the last 14 years. The district was recently realigned by the House and, starting in January 2013, will be comprised of East Hampton, East Haddam and the Westchester portion of Colchester. (The district currently includes a portion of Middletown instead of Westchester.)

“I’ve carefully thought about re-election for many months,” Hamm stated in the release. “I’m very proud of the 14 years of service I’ve given to my district and especially enjoyed representing the families of the 34th House District.”

Hamm could not be reached for additional comment this week.

Over the past week, reactions have poured in from fellow state politicians who praised Hamm for her work in the House, in particular citing her advocacy for children and the envi-

ronment. In the release, a list of her accomplishments from her career include: decriminalizing offender status for 16- and 17-year-olds; advocating for constituents concerning the Department of Children and Families and Connecticut Juvenile Training School; updating safety regulations at the Kleen Energy Power Plant in Middletown; and repealing the sales tax on caskets.

At the local level, Hamm has also worked on the preservation and restoration of the Comstock Bridge, provided funds for the Chatham Historical Society, secured funding for Lake Pocotopaug, and established the Gov. William A. O’Neill Highway.

“Gail Hamm has served the people of her 34th District with distinction for 14 years,” stated House Speaker Christopher G. Donovan (D-Meriden). “She has made important contributions to Connecticut, working tirelessly with colleagues to set policy and direction on issues involving children and the law. Her integrity and professionalism are universally admired, and she will be missed in Hartford.”

State Rep. Joseph Serra (D-Middletown) also offered his thoughts on Hamm’s impending re-

tirement.

“It has been an honor to have served alongside Rep. Hamm, and her wisdom and friendship will be sorely missed,” he said. “During her tenure in the House, Gail consistently displayed an unwavering integrity and love for her community that set a standard we can all strive for.”

According to her official website, prior to serving as state representative, Hamm served on the East Hampton Board of Education from 1991-98, serving as the chair for four of those years. She also chaired the personnel committee of the school board, negotiating contracts with teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries and bus drivers. In the press release, Hamm states that she intends to remain active in local politics.

Hamm’s announcement comes three weeks after former East Hampton Town Council member Christopher Goff confirmed he would be running as a Democrat for the position this year. On the Republican side, Melissa Ziobron, the economic development coordinator for East Haddam, has filed as an exploratory candidate for the representative position.



Gail Hamm

Tierney Presents \$34.27 Million Budget in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

At the Hebron Board of Selectmen's meeting on March 1, Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney presented a proposed budget for the 2012-13 year of \$34.27 million – a scant increase over current year spending.

The spending package represents an increase of \$182,574, or just .54 percent. The proposal includes \$8.51 million for Hebron's general government, \$12.01 million for the Hebron Board of Education and \$13.75 million earmarked for Hebron's share of the RHAM Board of Education budget.

RHAM accounts for 40 percent of the budget, while the Hebron Board of Education makes up 35 percent and the town, 25 percent.

"There's not much of a change [in the general government budget] over the last three years if you take a look at that," Tierney noted.

The adopted general government budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year was \$8.83 million, while the current year's is \$8.93 million.

Tierney explained the proposed expenditures make up less than a 1 percent increase to the overall budget from 2011-12.

The RHAM levy without debt constituted the largest expenditure increase at \$461,067, followed by the Hebron Board of Education at \$218,373 and General Government at \$129,811. Other expenditure increases were for contributions to various funds, such as the Capital Improvement Program (\$17,457), Cap Non-Recurring (\$10,687) and Revaluation (\$50,000).

A proposed salary increase of 2 percent for non-union and part-time employees, a 2 percent contractual increase for the public works department and an average of 5.39 percent increase for the parks union was also brought forth. Tierney stated non-union, part time and public works did not receive a raise in 2011-12, and the clerical and supervisor union's were currently in contract negotiations.

In the department budget summary and index, payroll was listed increasing \$46,589 to \$2,270,557. Employee benefits increased \$72,120 to \$1,011,867 and ambulance services increased \$52,244. Smaller increases included a \$13,080 increase for Economic Development, \$4,995 for street services, and \$5,221 for the library.

A couple expenditure decreases were also noted, making a significant impact on the total expenditure amount. It was explained in 2012-13 the debt service liability drops off by \$688,114, or 37.02 percent. The proposed budget utilizes \$269,008 of that amount to reduce the expenditure level, while the remaining \$419,106 results in a reduction to the bottom line of the budget.

The combined decreases make the total town services budget negative \$558,303. It is due to the reduction in debt services, combined with other decreases such as \$37,322 in solid/bulky waste recycling and \$23,039 in insurance that the total general government budget is 4.69

percent less than the 2011-12 fiscal year.

Additionally, RHAM debt decreases \$77,760, bringing the total expenditure change to \$182,574.

Various budget initiatives were also mentioned including a new emergency management position at a cost of \$9,697.

"The fire marshal has two roles that make up his full week," Tierney explained, saying he spent 32 of them as marshal and eight as the Emergency Management Director.

"This year he really let us know we need to do some work in that area," Tierney said.

A new line item to provide compensation to EMS responders was also recommended at a cost of \$24,221, along with the creation of a 13-hour-per-week part-time Economic Development Coordinator position at a cost of \$13,425.

The budget also recommends restoring hours to two existing positions: the part-time clerical position in the Assessor's office and the Wetlands Enforcement Officer, for a total cost of \$10,490.

In regards to revenues it was explained general government revenues were projected to decrease from \$918,302 to \$892,680 based on Governor Dannel Malloy's proposed budget numbers.

Education revenues increased \$96,662 from \$6,911,222 to \$7,007,884, and additional taxes to be collected based on the proposed budget

brings tax revenue to \$25,899,779 from \$25,808,615 – an increase of \$91,164.

It was also recommended in Tierney's summary a \$220,370 contribution be made to the Debt Management Fund to bring it to a zero balance.

"Please keep in mind that this is a fluid document," Tierney read from his letter to the selectmen on March 1, "and numbers will change as we go through the next couple of months. We have based this proposed budget on information available to us today, with placeholders for unknown or estimated amounts."

The Board of Selectmen will review the budget throughout the month of March, and make a recommendation to the Board of Finance by March 31. At that point, the Board of Finance will review budget requests during the beginning of April. Their recommended budget will be presented at a hearing, scheduled to take place April 12 at 7 p.m. at RHAM High School. A referendum to vote on the town budget will occur on May 8, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Hebron Elementary School.

The next budget meeting will take place Tuesday, March 13, at 7:30 p.m., at Douglas Library. Anyone with questions regarding the budget can email them to budget2012@hebronct.com. Received emails will be forwarded to the boards of selectmen, finance and education.

Hebron's Historic Hills Farm Back in Business

by Geeta Schrayter

Driving through Hebron and similar towns throughout Connecticut, it's not uncommon to see old farm houses nestled near a big red barn and surrounded by acres of land.

But these days many of the barns, which would have once housed livestock, are empty or used for storage. In a report from the Economic Research Service with the United States Department of Agriculture, it was shown the number of farms with dairy cows in the United States decreased steadily from 648,000 in 1970 to 75,000 in 2006 – an 88 percent drop.

In Hebron, however, the number of dairy farms is up one more, since the historic Hills Dairy Farm is back in operation.

The farm, which has been owned by the Hills family since 1895, was last run by Alan and Denise Hills for over 20 years. They sold their cows in 2004, but now, there's a new herd in town – cared for by their son, Greg Hills and his wife Kim.

"I worked for my parents until 2004," said Hills, who said he then decided "to go see what something else was like," and started working in plumbing and heating.

But about three years ago, he and his wife decided to get the farm up and running.

"What really got us thinking about it again was – we met a cheese maker who we were

talking to for a while about possibly trying to do something with," Hills said. "It didn't end up working out but it set our wheels turning."

Hills said he and his wife always knew they wanted to do something with the farm, but before that, "we probably never pictured us milking cows again."

In order to get the farm fully operational, Hills explained it involved making a lot of structural repairs, renovations, getting a business loan and of course – the cows.

"We lucked out," said Hills. "We got half [of the cows] from a farmer in Coventry" and the rest from Massachusetts. At present, there are 43 milking cows and 9 heifer calves in the herd, and Hills said he plans to get bigger – but not by much.

"We'd like to get as big as we can without having to rely on hiring help," Hills explained. While mentioning they had a lot of volunteers, Hills stated there are no additional employees – "it's just me and my wife."

Along with helping out on the farm – "she works with the animals and runs the equipment now" – Hills' wife is also a teacher. But for Hills, his work is the farm.

"I spend every minute here," he said. "I start at 5:30 in the morning and I'm home by 7:30-8."

The farm signed a contract with DairyLea, a



The Hills Dairy Farm is back in operation. It was last run by Alan and Denise Hills, who sold their cows in 2004. But the Hills' son Greg – a fourth-generation farmer – and his wife Kim have started the farm up again, and it will be open to the public during the Maple Fest this weekend.

local dairy cooperative whose milk goes into labels like Garelick, and began shipping last July.

"It's definitely a little bumpy getting the cows transitioned and working out all the little kinks – but we got our system down pretty good now," said Hills.

And bumps aside, Hills stated he's happy to be back.

"It feels like I'm supposed to be here. It's just neat that I'm a fourth generation farmer... hopefully I can pass it down to a fifth generation," he said.

Later on, Hills stated they'd like to market their own products and "at some point have a little creamery."

But in the more immediate future, Hills and his wife will open the farm to the public during this weekend's Maple Fest, providing visitors with the opportunity to see what it's like on a dairy farm – and enjoy fried cheese curds, too!

"We thought [the Maple Fest] would be a good way to kind of say, 'hey, we're back in business over here.' And you know, I guess we're proud of the place, too," he said.

"Everybody will be able to tour the milking facility, there'll be fried cheese curds for sale [with] a choice of maybe three sauces," and kids will be able to take pictures with and pet the



Holsteins are a breed of cattle most commonly used for dairy production.

cows and hop up on the tractors, Hills added.

Visitors can stop by Hills Farm, located at 527 Gilead St., on Saturday or Sunday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Maple Fest Pancake Breakfast to Honor Hebron Soldier

by Geeta Schrayter

At this weekend's Maple Fest, the Hebron Lions Club will hold its annual pancake breakfast, and this year, the proceeds will be going toward the Wounded Warrior Project and an area soldier.

The Wounded Warrior Project "started as a program to provide comfort items to wounded service members" by a group of veterans and friends, but "has grown into a complete rehabilitative effort to assist warriors as they recover and transition back to civilian life," the project website states.

The Hebron Lions Club decided to dedicate the event to the project after learning about Marine CPL Greg Caron, an Ellington resident who was injured while serving overseas, and whose grandparents are longtime Hebron residents with ties to the Lions Club. Hebron Charities Chairman Richard Griswold explained Caron's grandfather Adrian Caron was one of the founding members of the club along with his brothers.

Griswold continued on to say Adrian and his wife Murial approached the Lions in regards to helping their grandson, and "we said 'yes.'"

"When we found out that Greg's two brothers were also Marine veterans, we decided on the Wounded Warrior Project," he said, adding "it was fitting to recognize the brothers for their service to the country, and in particular we wanted to help Greg with his return to CT."

Caron was wounded last November when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded during his second tour in Afghanistan. Caron lost both his legs, a tip of his finger, received shrapnel to the right side of his body and broke his collarbone, it's stated on the website for The Greg Caron Family Fund.

Caron's grandmother explained he's still recovering in Washington and said, "I still can't

believe it happened." She went on to say you never expect an injury will actually take place and "it's very sad." But she added Caron had a good attitude.

In an email sent to Murial, it was shared that Caron had recently received his new legs.

"He said 'oh, I got my legs today' and now he says [his wife] 'Nina can't even keep up with me,'" Murial said. "So he's got a good attitude and it seems like he's doing really well."

But Murial, who will attend the breakfast, continued, "it makes me want to cry."

"It gives me goosebumps every time I talk about [my grandsons]," she said. "I'm so proud of them."

The breakfast may take place for only a day, but Griswold stated the Hebron Lions Club and the local community plan to continue helping Caron and other veterans.

"Our RHAM Leo Club is working on a project to raise funds to assist the Greg Caron Foundation," he said, adding, "other area service clubs and individuals have and will conduct fundraisers for the Greg Caron Foundation. One of our goals was to provide assistance to returning veterans and the mission of the Wounded Warrior Project certainly matched our wishes."

The breakfast will take place from 8-11 a.m. Sunday, March 11, at the Lions Fairgrounds. Cost is \$6.50 for adults and \$3 for children, and includes pancakes and syrup, French toast, eggs, hash browns, sausage, orange juice, coffee and tea, milk and drinks for the kids. It is expected there will be over 400 people in attendance.

For more information on the Wounded Warrior Project, visit woundedwarriorproject.org. For more information on the Greg Caron Foundation, visit gregcaronfoundation.com.

Hebron Grand List Drops Nearly 13 Percent

by Geeta Schrayter

The results of the 2011 revaluation are in, and for the first time since 2005, the Hebron Grand List is below \$800 million.

"This year is the first time in a long time the [Grand List] has gone down due to revaluation," Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney said at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on March 1.

Revaluation is the process of evaluating real estate in town and ensuring all properties are assessed at market value. This then allows for the redistribution of the town's tax burden.

According to state statute, a revaluation has to be performed every five years. The last revaluation in Hebron took place in 2006, but the results then were quite different. The Grand List that year increased more than \$200 million, and has remained above \$800 million ever since.

Each year after saw further increases, but the net taxable Grand List for Oct. 1, 2011 came in at \$768,630,730 – a decrease of \$99,588,090, or 12.96 percent, from 2010's list.

In a summary put together by Hebron Assessor Debbie Gernhardt, it was explained "with the majority of property values on the decline this was the primary reason for the decrease in the Grand List."

Real estate property assessments decreased from \$787,543,470 to \$684,005,270 – a difference of \$103,538,200.

But both personal property and motor vehicles increased from \$13,348,360 to \$13,883,940 and from \$67,326,990 to \$70,741,520, respectively, due to new purchases and vehicles.

Still, the positive changes in personal property and motor vehicles weren't enough to offset the 15.14 percent real estate decrease.

The top 10 real estate taxpayers for the 2011 levy year were: Village Shoppes LLC at \$1,995,070, Hebron Properties LLC at

\$1,470,000, Blackledge Country Club INC at \$1,464,680, Hebron Country Manor LLC at \$1,309,770, B.I.S.S. INC at \$1,241,870, Holland, Deborah at \$857,920, Houston, Hayden O. JR at \$846,930, Footehills Farm INC at \$699,960, Rivera, Jorge L. and Marie R. at \$640,010, Schadtler, Robert A. and Mary J. at \$567,630.

Connecticut Light & Power was the highest personal property taxpayer at \$6,423,170 followed by the Connecticut Water Company at \$1,576,470. Blackledge Country Club INC came in third at \$416,980, followed by Ted's INC at \$410,120 and Drake Petroleum Country INC at \$210,500. The remaining top ten taxpayers for personal property were Celco Partnership at \$170,720, CIT Technology Financing Services INC at \$169,640, Tallwood Country Club LLC at \$168,290, Hebron Center Dentistry LLC at \$161,190 and AT&T Mobility LLC at \$156,240.

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

During the budget presentation on March 1, a proposed mill rate was shown at 34.30, a 4.04 mill increase over the current rate of 30.26. The last time the mill rate was higher than 34.30 was the 2006-07 year, when the mill was set at 34.89.

A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property. If approved, a resident with property assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$8,575 in taxes for the 2012-13 year, up from \$7,565 in the current year.

Meetings with the Board of Assessment Appeals are scheduled to take place throughout the month while the budget process continues.



Hebron's seniors joined hands and sang "God Bless America" at the end of Wednesday's celebration for the reopening of the senior center.

Hebron Seniors Return to Their Familiar Digs

by Geeta Schrayter

After nearly five months of waiting, Hebron's seniors celebrated Wednesday afternoon for the reopening of the Russell Mercier Senior Center.

The center, which had been closed since October after over 50,000 gallons of water flooded the building when the hot water heater burst, was filled with music and laughter once again.

"Welcome home" banners were taped to the front door – streamers and bright balloons decorated the community room. The sounds of both the senior center choral group, the Sunshine Singers, and Kasha Breau on the piano mixed with the happy chatter and laughter of the seniors as they mingled with one another, enjoying a variety of drinks and treats.

"I'm very happy with the turnout," said program coordinator Gina Nardi, mentioning about 60 people had signed up to attend, including staff.

"I'm glad we did it on the first day that we opened," she said, calling the event a success.

Nardi added the senior center was lucky to have had a lot of donations for the event, including hors d'oeuvres from Hebron Interfaith Human Services and balloons from Hebron Pharmacy.

"Some of the seniors even baked for us," she said.

Along with the seniors, state Rep. Pam Sawyer was also present at the celebration.

"How perfect is this," she said. "The sun is shining; we've got balloons, lots of color and camaraderie – just perfect."

The seniors in attendance felt similarly. "We had a nice time," said Maureen

Gustafson, who was there with her husband Fred. Although she'd recently had surgery, which would keep her from attending too many events right away, Gustafson said she planned to take advantage of the center's activities as soon as she's recovered.

"It might be a little while longer before I can come [to events]," she said, "but like they're having a [program] on medications – I'm definitely coming for that."

Jessie Kisner, who lives next to the center, said of the event, as she enjoyed a plate of desserts, "I just love it."

And resident Warren Holbrook said the event was "wonderful" and he was "happy to be back."

He mentioned he'd been coming to the senior center for 18 years, and he'd continue to do so.

"As long as I'm still breathing and still walking, I'll be here," he said. "It's my second home."

And those are the kinds of happy responses that make Nardi feel like she's doing her job.

"I really love the seniors. I love the atmosphere – they're just a riot," she said. "They make my day a thousand times better and I'm just looking to make them happy – today makes me feel like I'm doing my job because they're all happy, and they're happy to be back."

All of the senior programs and activities were held at the center on Wednesday, and Nardi stated "everything so far is set forward for the future."

For information on the senior center and events, call the senior center at 860-228-1700.



Students at Andover Elementary School celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday and Read Across America Day on Wednesday, while also learning about recycling. Students dressed the part of Cat in the Hat, donated books to the Read to Grow Foundation and watched an assembly about the "magic" of recycling.



Andover Students Celebrate Reading and Recycling

by Geeta Schrayter

"Thank goodness I'm not just a clam or a ham or a dusty old jar of sour gooseberry jam! I am what I am! That's a great thing to be! If I say so myself, Happy Birthday to me!" reads a quote from the Dr. Seuss book *Happy Birthday To You!*

And last Friday, March 2, the students at Andover Elementary School celebrated the birthday of the beloved children's author by donning big red bows, red and white striped hats and painting whiskers and black button noses on their faces.

On a bulletin board outside the cafeteria, there's a reference to the Seuss book *The Lorax* – students were asked to read five books, or 50 pages, and fill out a paper "Truffula Tree" with their name and the book info. The tree was then pinned onto the bulletin board to create the "Truffula Forest."

"My, how that forest grew over the last several weeks!" Principal Dave Griffin wrote in his March 2 letter.

The students were also celebrating another event that Friday: Read Across America Day. In the morning they filed in for an assembly in their *Cat in the Hat-esque* attire and slipped new or slightly-used books into containers to be donated to the Read to Grow Foundation. The students donated approximately 340 books for the foundation, which is a statewide nonprofit that looks to help build literacy from birth.

Read to Grow "works with parents in the hospital when a baby is born to help families understand that early literacy and language development are part of their child's overall healthy growth," the website states. The foundation "reaches 50 percent of the state's newborns and their families with a new children's book and literacy guidance," and distributes more than 130,000 free books to Connecticut children each year.

Students then watched a presentation focused not on the *Green Eggs and Ham* author, but *Going Green* – this year's Andover Elementary School theme.

Cyril the Sorcerer, who was introduced as having studied at McBrides Magic and Mystery School, "a real-life Hogwarts for modern magicians," presented a special magic show called "Recycling in Magic."

Through storytelling, Cyril shared the importance of recycling. In the first story, he captivated students with the tale of a town where everyone was happy, until the day ogres invaded and ate, drank and broke everything in sight.

Then an old wizard comes along and saves the day – scaring off the ogres and sweeping up the mess they left behind. But as he starts to magically make all the debris disappear, he's stopped when the townspeople make an important point.

"If you make everything in our town disappear, we will not have anything left!" Cyril said.

It's then the wizard realizes he needs to use a different type of magic – he needs to transform things rather than simply get rid of them.

At this point, Cyril caused students to gasp on more than one occasion as he took bits of old paper – the ogres had looked at the pictures in the newspapers, then ripped them up – and made a brand new page. He turned a piece of crumpled aluminum foil into a soup can, and pulled a metal toy car out of empty cans of peppers and pears – showing the students how trash can be taken and made into something new.

In the second story, which Cyril called the "best story yet," he told the students they were the heroes, much to their excitement.

"All of you have the same magic," he said, adding they didn't need a pointed hat or a wand, but a recycling bin.

"All you need is this," he said as he picked the bin up to show them. "When you put your old cans and bottles into this they will be transformed – changed over."

He went on to say a different kind of magic occurred if you didn't recycle, but it wasn't the good kind.

"Instead [the garbage] will get burned," he said.

"That's not a bad thing to do if we can't recycle something," he continued, but for those items that can be made new "it's the wrong kind of magic – don't do it. Be the hero of your own story. Be the good wizard and use your recycling bin."

Cyril then brought the assembly back to the importance of reading.

"Some people say 'oh books are so boring, they don't have anything in them'...but there's magic in books," he said as he pulled a colored scarf from a book with no contents.

Cyril then transformed coins into a library card and urged students to get one.

"Some say the most beautiful thing is gold – but there's magic greater than gold," he said, showing the card to the audience and explaining it "allows you to get thousands and thousands of dollars' worth of books," and learn about "anything you want," from dinosaurs to pirates.

As the assembly came to a close, the students were asked to repeat a reader's oath, promising to read every day because "each book that I read puts smarts in my head, 'cause brains grow more thoughts the more they are fed."

The students then returned to their classrooms, where they were read stories by guests such as selectwomen Julia A. Haverl and Elaine Burchardt.

Colchester Grand List Drops 9.49 Percent

by Katelyn Kelleher

The 2011 Grand List showed an expected drop from the previous year and fell near the average statewide.

The total for the Oct. 1, 2011, Grand List reflected a 9.49 percent, or \$124.38 million, decrease from the 2010 list. First Selectman Gregg Schuster attributed the decrease to the revaluation. 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.

Colchester's last revaluation year was 2006, as the state requires every town to complete a revaluation every five years.

Schuster said the town expected the decrease. "It's typical during this economy," he said. "Colchester is close to average."

Schuster said he thought the average statewide decrease was around 12 percent.

Tax assessor John Chaponis said every municipality that implemented a town-wide revaluation experienced an overall decrease.

The list's three categories, real estate, personal property and motor vehicle, saw differing results. Real estate showed a decrease of

\$131.78 million, or 11.4 percent, from 2010. Personal property decreased by \$2 million, or 5.8 percent. The motor vehicle total increased by \$7.14 million, or 6.6 percent.

Supplemental motor vehicles (autos purchased after Oct. 1 and taxed for a portion of the year) and prorates (properties constructed after Oct. 1) decreased by \$0.75 million, or 4.8 percent. Corrections and Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA) totals decreased by \$1 million, or 40 percent.

Real estate, supplemental motor vehicles, prorates, corrections and BAA totals decreased too due the revaluation and anticipated additional reductions, based on historical research and the current market, Chaponis said.

"We typically hold out \$2.5 million for BAA and corrections but have increased that for this year due to [the revaluation]," he said.

Chaponis said motor vehicle totals typically increase four out of every five years, and personal property typically decreases because it depreciates each year.

"If it increases, it is typically due to additional equipment being purchased," he said.

If it were not a revaluation year, "real estate would have increased due to new construction

that was added to the 2011 Grand List for the first time," Chaponis said.

While the Grand List and town budget are two separate entities, the decrease is likely to affect the mill rate, Schuster said. A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. 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. The current mill rate, based on the 2010 Grand List, is 25.07. For example, a person with property assessed at \$200,000 is paying \$5,014 in taxes on it.

Schuster said the Grand List's effect on taxes will be specific to the property owner, and people could see either an increase or decrease.

Chaponis said the cost of the inspection process for the 2011 revaluation was significantly lower than previous years thanks to a new method. He said this year's revaluation cost \$148,000, whereas 2001's cost \$284,000 and 2006, when the town sent out data mailers and did not inspect any properties, cost \$153,000.

"We performed some of the revaluation functions in-house; fully inspected half the town and

sent data mailers to half the town," he said. The town began completing inspections in March 2010.

Chaponis said towns must physically inspect the interior of each property at least once every 10 years.

"However, an assessor can choose to use a data mailer in lieu of an interior inspection if the assessor finds the returned data mailer acceptable," he said. "We chose to do a little of both this revaluation."

"Since physically inspecting properties is the most costly part of the project, the work performed in-house enabled us to complete a revaluation in which a large portion of the town was inspected, yet our overall costs were less than 2006," he said. "In my mind, this was a significant savings to the town without compromising the integrity of the project."

Chaponis said revaluation notices were mailed out last month and informal hearings are ongoing. Any property owners wishing to discuss their new valuation can schedule an appointment with Vision Project Manager Jason Lawrence at 1-888-844-4300.

Agriculture Experts Speak About Colchester Farmland Preservation

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

Guests from state agriculture organizations attended the Feb. 27 Agricultural Commission meeting to speak about farmland preservation options for landowners and potential farmers.

Connecticut Farm Bureau Executive Director Henry Talmage and Connecticut Farmland Trust Director of Projects Elisabeth Moore explained Colchester's options as a town to fund farmland preservation and gain public support for agricultural protection.

The experts explained the organizations don't aim to protect just any piece of land.

"This has been one of the knocks of land conservation as a whole, that we buy whatever's available," Moore said. "Someone's building a subdivision and we go 'Oh my gosh, we better protect this piece of land,' but it may or may not meet the objectives of the farmland program or even an open space program."

Moore said Colchester, as a town that values agriculture, would be ideal for a community farms program, adding that few towns have the attributes to make them eligible for one.

"They don't have all of the things that [Colchester already has]," she said. "It's about first deciding whether you want to it as a community and then looking for the tools that are there."

The farmland protection programs in Connecticut are: Connecticut Farmland Preserva-

tion Program, Joint State-Town Farmland Preservation Program, Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program, and Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.

Ranking criteria applied to land preservation opportunities allow the organizations to judge whether or not they want to invest. Based on different state programs' criteria for farmland protection, priority is given to land with a high percentage of prime agricultural soil, in proximity to other active farmland or protected lands, with diverse categories of natural resources and vulnerable to development. Priority is also given to projects that comply with local or regional open space plans, with a pending written offer with landowners, or with a high percentage of non-federal matching funds.

"We've had a beautiful piece of land that is at-risk and a seller who's really willing to sell it and it is garbage when it comes to farmland," Talmage said. "We're not doing anybody favors. The reality is the best farmland should be protected for agriculture."

"We're not saying don't protect other lands, we're saying protect the farmland for agriculture," Moore said.

Talmage said maintaining a set of criteria adds integrity to the program.

"Whether it's individual investors, land trusts from towns, state or federal government, the

investment people are making in protecting the farmland has value," he said.

He said protecting farmland makes it more affordable to purchase, which helps young farmers enter into the business.

"People worry there's not going to be someone in the next generation," Moore said. "I get a number of calls per week from young people interested in farming. The trick is making it affordable. What the conservation easement does is dramatically lower the value of the property and give young people and opportunity to own the land."

Talmage added, "There are many who argue that even protected farmland is too expensive, but if we didn't have land that is protected, we hole off land for young farmers. If we just let land values go wherever they go, how is it even possible that anyone could even buy farmland at \$60-70K an acre?"

Moore mentioned a website called FarmerLink, designed to match farmers looking for land with landowners looking for someone to farm. "It has not been wildly successful to date because there are many more people looking than farmers that are listing," she said. "I think it's really an issue of getting the word out in the community that this resource exists and it's free."

She added that part of her job is to put to-

gether layers of funding to get farmers money to buy land. "Despite what's going on with the economy, the state farmland preservation program does have money: \$10 million a year," she said. "But the state is not doing projects unless the town puts in money."

However, Talmage said much of the purpose of state funding is to protect local food-producing farms. "

The state brought about the preservation program out of concern about Connecticut not being able to feed itself," he said, pointing out that it would require 137,000 acres of farmland to feed all state residents and there are currently 40,000 acres of protected farmland.

"We're talking about making small changes back toward feeding a higher percentage of our residents from our Connecticut-grown products. That could make a huge impact on the land protection," he said.

Talmage said although it would be impossible or much more costly to grow certain products locally, bananas for example, recognizing the value of locally-produced food is how "local agriculture shines."

"If we can get a change from less than 1.5 percent of local produce sold consumed here to 5 percent," he said, "that could make a huge difference in the landscape and the profitability of agriculture."

Building Committee Recommends Architect for WJJMS Project

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

After ranking firms based on price, qualifications and an interview process, the Building Committee has recommended an architect to complete the schematic designs of the William J. Johnston Middle School project.

The project is a plan to renovate the middle school and combine it with a community center that would include a space for seniors. First Selectman Gregg Schuster said declining enrollment at the school will leave some empty space and the town plans to utilize that space for the center.

"This could offer expanded programs and allow us to consolidate some of our facilities," he said.

Schuster said the stand-alone youth center the town currently uses is inadequate and the senior center is a rented building.

The Building Committee recommended Tecton Architects, Inc. for the project, over Lawrence Associates, which was the second choice, and 14 other firms.

Tecton's bid wasn't the lowest presented for the project, but a 2009 change in the state statute allows towns to consider factors other than the bid price when selecting architectural services.

The Colchester purchasing policy – which

was changed in 2009 to incorporate the state statute – states "the award shall be made to the bidder whose bid meets the requirements, terms and conditions contained in the bid specifications, and is the lowest among those bidders possessing the skill, ability and integrity necessary for faithful performance of the work based on objective criteria."

The policy includes that the award is not solely based on the lowest fee proposal submitted, but considers past performance and financial responsibility.

Selectman James Ford said the Building Committee made a Quality-Based Selection (QBS), which is approved by the state, where a number of different factors are considered, not just price.

"I don't think you'd select your doctor just on price," Ford said. "The state allows the consideration of quality as well as price in selecting who the committee wanted to recommend to the Board of Selectmen."

Building Committee member Thomas Tyler said the committee developed all the ranking criteria and interview questions for the firms and factored in all the information when making the decision.

Lawrence Associates was the lowest bid of

all 16 firm submissions. The firm's bid price was \$24,500, \$8,000 below Tecton Architects' bid of \$32,500, which was the second-lowest submitted.

Lawrence also narrowly bested Tecton in scoring, based on demonstrated success on past projects, experience of personnel, design and cost control among other criteria. However, members of the Building Committee ranked Tecton first after an interview process.

During the interviews, the committee asked the four final firms how they would minimize impact on the school during the project, how they would integrate each component (school, senior center, community center) into one cohesive projects and about their success with funding mechanisms for maximum reimbursement for schools, senior centers and community centers, among several other questions.

Ford said the town attorney is looking over the process to come to a decision whether or not to endorse the recommendation.

In a letter to Ford, Colchester resident David Dander, who served on the Jack Jackter School and Colchester Elementary School building committees, said he found it "troubling and curious" that Tecton as recommended over Lawrence.

"Lawrence Associates has a long and positive relationship with Colchester...I've had 10+ years' time to work with and know Anwar Hossain from the Lawrence Associates. I believe that his firm is definitely qualified," the letter stated.

Dander said the Building Committee produced no evidence of the firms' requests for proposals, which the firms brought to the interviews, being evaluated or ranked. Additionally, he was not able to obtain information on a ranking system for how each firm fared on each interview question.

Schuster said the selectmen are expected to make a decision whether or not to approve the contract at their March 15 meeting.

"When the town makes a decision on the preliminary designs we will hold a town referendum with cost estimates," he said. "If they want to move forward it will go to the Building Committee in a fall referendum."

The plan would then go on to the state, because renovating a school is part of the project. "State grants might offset the costs of the middle school part of the project," Schuster said.

Schuster added the plan is still in its infancy. "It could be two or three years before a shovel goes into the ground," he said.

Hayn Pleads Not Guilty

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

The former Board of Finance vice chairman pled not guilty Tuesday to charges he burned down his Norwich business last fall.

Bruce Hayn, 54, pled not guilty to first-degree arson, insurance fraud, and second-degree providing a false statement at New London Superior Court.

Norwich Police arrested Hayn Jan. 16 on charges that he set fire to his Norwich wood stove and pellet fuel company, Shur Fire, on Oct. 27, 2011, and filed a fraudulent insurance claim.

Norwich Police Sgt. Peter Camp told the

Rivereast in January officers discovered security footage of Hayn attempting to start a fire at the business Oct. 26. Footage from the next night showed Hayn walking toward his business twisting up paper towels, and that night the business caught fire.

Camp said Hayn initially lied to police about the fire, but eventually admitted to starting the fire and signed a sworn statement to that effect.

Hayn is being represented by Marlborough attorney Peter Soulsby, who did not return calls for comment. Hayn's next court date is April 10 in New London.

Favry Placed on Leave

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

Animal Control Officer Don Favry has been placed on administrative leave pending an investigation, First Selectman Gregg Schuster announced this week.

A press release from Schuster's office Wednesday said Favry has been placed on leave following a preliminary investigation, and will continue until the conclusion of the entire investigation.

Schuster would not give any additional information about the investigation, as it is a personnel matter.

During Favry's leave, Assistant Animal Control Officer Bill Paul and other area ACOs "will perform all duties necessary to address animal control issues and care of any housed animals," Schuster said.

Favry has been under fire since a Feb. 3 *Rivereast* story in which Connecticut Animal House President Chris Lamb, a former animal control officer, complained about the pound, and specifically her interactions with Favry during a recent visit.

Lamb also attended a public forum on animal control the town held Feb. 23. The meeting was facilitated by Schuster, Colchester Resident State Trooper Marc Petrucci, who is Favry's direct supervisor, State Animal

Control Officer Linda Wenner and State Animal Control Supervisor Raymond Connors. At the meeting, many residents expressed their dissatisfaction with Favry and offered suggestions on how to improve the Colchester dog pound.

Lamb said she thought the meeting was effective. "I think the residents made their voices known that things need to change in their town," she said.

Although Lamb had no comment on Favry being placed on leave, she said she was "pleased to hear that the town of Colchester is taking action and making efforts to improve."

Favry also serves as Marlborough's animal control officer. Due to Colchester's actions against him, Favry is on leave from his Marlborough position as well. Marlborough has an agreement in which it uses Colchester's pound and, Marlborough First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski said this week "due to the joint agreement and the fact he can't access the facilities, he can't perform his duties for Marlborough."

Paul will also perform animal control duties in Marlborough during Favry's leave.

Obituaries

Colchester

LuAnn Avery

LuAnn (Duhaime) Avery, 51, of Colchester and formerly of Goffstown, NH, beloved wife of Kevin, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 29, at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown.

Born Aug. 30, 1960 in Manchester, NH, she was the daughter of Carol (Rae) Duhaime of Marlborough and the late Lucien Duhaime.

LuAnn was a graduate of Trinity High School in Manchester, NH, and went on to earn her bachelor's degree in paralegal studies from Notre Dame College in Manchester, NH. She was a paralegal for many years, most recently for Dechert, LLP, in Hartford.

On April 22, 1989, she and Kevin were married in Kingston, NH, and moved to Colchester in 1995.

While in New Hampshire, she was a longtime member and elder of the Bedford Presbyterian Church.

In her spare time, she enjoyed crafting and cooking, she was an avid reader and a collector of country artifacts.

In addition to her loving husband of 22 years and her mother, she is survived by a brother, Michael Duhaime of Manchester, NH; a niece, Kaitlyn Duhaime; and numerous friends.

Friends called Tuesday, March 6, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A celebration of her life was observed that evening. Burial was private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Middlesex Cancer Center, 28 Crescent St., Middletown 06457 or to the Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue (YGRR), P.O. Box 808, Hudson, MA 01749-0808.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



East Hampton

Edmund Grose

Edmund Grose, 96, of Tupper Lake, NY, formerly of Glastonbury and East Hampton, beloved husband of the late Janet Mitchell Grose, died peacefully at Adirondack Medical Center Thursday, March 1. He was born Feb. 15, 1916, in Scranton, PA, the son of Edmund L. Grose and Catherine (Hean) Grose. He lived with his daughter Deborah Usher and her family for fourteen years, making many friends in Connecticut.

Following high school graduation in 1934, Edmund enlisted in the U.S. Army serving with the 35th Infantry Unit stationed at Schofield Barracks, Oahu, HI. Edmund was honorably discharged in 1939 at the rank of corporal. He then moved to New York City where he was employed at Beth-El Hospital and the East River Savings Bank until being called back to active duty on Dec. 20, 1941. He served in St. John, Newfoundland, and Greenland as part of the Army Air Corps unit deployed to locate enemy submarines during World War II. Edmund spent 17 months in Greenland before returning to the States.

While still on active duty, Edmund married Janet Mitchell Feb. 10, 1945, at Will Rogers Field in Oklahoma. He was honorably discharged in November 1945, attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant. He and his wife Janet then relocated to New York City, where they originally met. In 1950, they moved to Janet's hometown of Tupper Lake, NY. Edmund was employed by the Sunshine Store, the Tupper Lake National Bank, and the Harold Nichols Insurance Agency, from which he retired.

Edmund served as a Tupper Lake Village Trustee and was a member of the Holy Name Catholic Church Parish Council for many years. He was an avid reader, flower gardener, New York Giants fan and devoted follower of current events. Above all, he was a kind and affable man who loved his family and always had a smile and a cheerful greeting for everyone he met.

Edmund was predeceased by three brothers: Donald, George and William Grose, and three stepbrothers, James, Robert and Jack McCarrick. He is survived by three daughters: Carol Merrihew (Tim) of Tupper Lake, NY, Catherine Grose of Latham, NY, and Deborah Usher (Michael) of Glastonbury; five grandchildren: Eric Short (Michelle) of Gardner, MA, Trevor Short (Casie) of Leominster, MA, Noelle Short of Long Lake, NY, Kelly Usher of Salt Lake City, UT, and Shannon Usher of Amherst, MA; and two great-grandchildren: Benjamin and Drew Short, sons of Eric (Michelle) Short.

Calling hours were held at Stuart-Fortune-Keough Funeral Home in Tupper Lake, NY, on Monday, March 5. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Holy Name Catholic Church Tuesday, March 6, followed by a reception at Carol and Tim Merrihew's home in Tupper Lake. Burial with military honors was at Holy Name Catholic Cemetery, Tupper Lake, NY.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to High Peaks Hospice and Palliative Care, PO Box 840, Saranac Lake, NY 12983, or the American Cancer Society in care of the funeral home.

Online condolences may be made at stuartfortunekeoughfuneralhome.com.



Hebron

Mildred E. Campbell

Mildred E. (Buck) Campbell, of Glastonbury, passed away Thursday, March 2, at the age of 93. She was born Aug. 3, 1918, in Hebron, to the late Clinton and Grace (Weir) Buck. She was a longtime resident of Glastonbury.

She is survived by her husband of over 60 years, Walter K. Campbell; her two sons, William Campbell and his wife Kathleen of Hebron, James Campbell of South Carolina; her daughter, Donna Campbell of Hebron; her four grandchildren, Stephanie Hurnberg of Willimantic, Billie Campbell of Hebron, Christopher Campbell and Brady Ryan Campbell, both of South Carolina; and four great-grandchildren.

A graveside service was held Wednesday, March 7, at the Gilead Cemetery, Hebron. To leave an online condolence, visit glastonburyfuneral.com.

Andover

Lucille (Rogers) Kukucka

On Monday, March 5, Lucille (Rogers) Kukucka, 83, of Andover, entered into eternal peace after a year long illness surrounded by her loving family. She was born in Norwich June 27, 1928, to the late John and Marion (Hunter) Rogers.

She attended Samuel Huntington School and was a proud alumnus of Norwich Free Academy, Class of 1947. While attending high school, she helped with the war effort as a civil air cadet with the Civil Air Patrol.

On Oct. 17, 1949, she married the love of her life, Charles Kukucka of Andover. They enjoyed 60 years together, raising their family before he passed away Jan. 27, 2010. As her children were growing up, she became active in many town groups including Mother's Club, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, the Norton Children's Fund, Andover Fire Department Women's Auxiliary and the Andover Seniors "Young At Heart" Club. Lucille enjoyed bowling, trips to the casinos and bus trips with the seniors. She loved opening her home to family and friends. She will be greatly missed by all who loved her.

Lucille leaves her loving children Charles Henry Kukucka of Andover, Marie K. Meixell of Manchester, Diane Kukucka of Windham and Carol Kukucka of Andover. She also leaves her five adoring grandchildren, Dale Kukucka of Westbrook, Wayne Kukucka and his wife Suzi of West Hartford, Gail Milliard and Michael Boyd, Zachary Milliard, all of Andover, and Marlie Meixell of Manchester. She also leaves her great-grandchildren whom she so loved, Lucille Elizabeth Kukucka of West Hartford and great grandson Milliard/Boyd (expectant) of Andover. She also leaves her sisters-in-law, Grace Kukucka (Andrew), Sue (Kukucka) Lebejko and Lucille Rogers (John); her god daughter Jill Rossing; numerous nieces and nephews; extended family members and special friends.

Lucille was predeceased by her brothers and sisters Richard, John, Robert, Russell, Helen Choquette and Jane Ross. She was also predeceased by many brothers and sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews.

The family would like to express their heartfelt appreciation to the VNA East Hospice of Mansfield Center for their love and compassionate care of Lucille.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to VNA East Hospice, 34 Ledgebrook Dr., Mansfield Center, CT 06250 or First Congregational Church of Andover, 359 Route 6, Andover, CT 06232.

Lucille's family will receive relatives and friends Saturday, March 10, between 9:30 and 11 a.m. at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St. (Rt. 195), Willimantic, with the funeral service beginning at 11 a.m. Interment will then follow in Townsend Cemetery, Andover.

For an online memorial guestbook and directions to the funeral home, visit potterfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

William A. Bellavance Sr.

William A. Bellavance Sr., 80, formerly of Anderson Road, passed away Monday, Feb. 27, at Harrington Court in Colchester. He was born July 9, 1931, in Norwich, a son of the late Eugene and Odna (Zercie) Bellavance.

Mr. Bellavance attended Bryant College and was a graduate of Central Connecticut State University. He was a U.S. Navy veteran of the Korean War. Mr. Bellavance had worked in the family business, Bellavance's Restaurant in Moosup for many years and was last employed in real estate. He was a member of All Hallows Council 270 K of C and was Knight of the Year in 2007-08, and was also a member of the Plainfield Lions Club, where he was honored with the Melvin Jones Fellow Award. He was the husband of Marion Gertrude (Vachon) Bellavance who died Jan. 12, 2009.

Survivors include a son, William W. Bellavance Jr. of Glastonbury; a daughter, Denise Legato of Colchester; two brothers, Robert Bellavance of Becket, MA, and James Bellavance of Thompson; one sister, Donna Mizak of Trumbull; two grandsons, Jonathan and Brian Legato; also several nieces and nephews.

A memorial Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Friday, April 27, at 10 a.m., in All Hallows Church, Moosup. Burial will follow in All Hallows Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 13067, Alexandria, VA 22312.

Dougherty Bros. Funeral Home, Plainfield, has been entrusted with arrangements.

Portland

Jean T. Zaborowski

Jean T. Zaborowski, 79, of Portland, wife of Peter F. Zaborowski, passed away Friday, March 2, at home. She was the daughter of the late Harold M. and Elise E. (Taylor) Porteus.

Born Oct. 31, 1932, in Middletown, she lived in Portland for most of her life. She worked as an R.N. for the Portland V.N.A. for many years. She was a member of the First Congregational Church in Portland, the Mattabassett Camping Association, the Portland Garden Club, and she also enjoyed knitting and doing crossword puzzles.

Besides her husband, she leaves a son, George A. Stevenson Jr of Portland; a sister, Sue Larson of Portland; three grandchildren, Rachel J. Stevenson, Emily E. Stevenson, and Jennifer M. Stevenson; and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by two sons, William B. Stevenson III and Jeffrey T. Stevenson.

Funeral services were held Thursday, March 8, at First Congregational Church, 554 Main St., with Rev. Jane Hawken officiating. Burial was in Trinity Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Thursday at the church, before the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice 28 Crescent St Middletown, CT. 06457

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



Marlborough

Katherine Jean Vshalifski

Katherine Jean Vshalifski, 84, of Marlborough, beloved wife of John Vshalifski, died Saturday, March 3, at Marlborough Health Care. Born Oct. 13, 1927, in Richford, VT, she was the daughter of the late Ogle and Fannie (Gross) Sawyer. Katherine had lived in Marlborough for most of her life and had retired from the State of Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles.

Besides her husband John, she is survived by her sons, Scott Vshalifski and his wife Donna of Andover, David Vshalifski of Colchester; two former daughters-in-law, Denise Vshalifski and Dina Vshalifski; three grandchildren, Scott, Tyler and Devin.

She was predeceased by three children, Danny, Donna and Pamela.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, March 6, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with Rev. Robert Faulhaber officiating. Burial followed in Marlborough Cemetery. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home Tuesday morning before the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Assoc., P.O. Box 308, Marlborough, CT 06447.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Michael S. Benard

Michael S. Benard, 54, of East Hampton and Lakeville, MA, and formerly of Melrose, MA, passed away Thursday, March 8, surrounded by his loving family.



Michael was born Oct. 5, 1957, in Stoneham, MA, a son of the late Ernest L. and Shirley L. (McRae) Benard. He was raised in Melrose and graduated from Melrose High School, Class of 1975. He married his beloved wife of 30 years, Donna Ferguson on Nov. 7, 1981, and they settled in East Hampton to raise a family and build his business.

With hard work and dedication, Michael started Bobcat of Connecticut and Greater Springfield and grew the business into a highly successful provider of light construction equipment. Following his parents' example on how to operate a business, Michael became the largest seller of Bobcat equipment in the state of Connecticut. He was a longtime supporter of Little League baseball, was a member of Northeast Equipment Dealers Association and was an active member of the Rotary Club of East Hampton, with many years dedicated to the Interact club, the Rotary Student Exchange Program.

He enjoyed traveling to Europe, St. Maarten, and especially Gulfport, Florida. Michael also truly enjoyed many joyous occasions and gatherings of family and friends at the family house on Cape Cod.

Above all else, Michael was a dearly devoted husband and father. His passion, love and enthusiasm for his children were constant and overflowing. He loved anything involving his family and friends, especially boating on Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton. Michael's exuberant nature and personal kindness touched the lives of people everywhere he went. He will be forever loved and always remembered.

He was the beloved husband of Donna L. (Ferguson) Benard, with whom he shared 30 years of marriage; devoted father of Andrew Benard and his fiancé Elizabeth Weinstein of Irvine, CA, and Chelsea Benard of East Hampton; cherished son-in-law of Christine A. Ferguson of Marlborough; loving brother of Richard Benard and his wife Cynthia of Lakeville, MA. Gary Benard and his wife Susan of Melrose, MA, Gerald Carney and his wife Kathy of Pocasset, MA, and the late Jeffrey Benard. He is also survived by many nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews.

Relatives and friends will honor and remember Michael's life by gathering for visiting hours at the Robinson Funeral Home, 809 Main St., Melrose, MA, on Sunday, March 11, from 2-6 p.m., and again on Monday morning, March 12, at Seven Mile Road Church, 84 Green St., Melrose, MA where his funeral service will be celebrated at a time to be announced. Interment will be in Wyoming Cemetery, Melrose, MA.

Honor Michael's life with a gift in his memory to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, 9 Erie Dr., Ste. 101, Natick, MA 01760 (lls.org), or to the Be the Match Foundation, 3001 Broadway St. N.E., Ste. 601, Minneapolis, MN 55413 (marrow.org).

For directions, online tribute, condolences, or to share a memory, visit RobinsonFuneralHome.com.

Marlborough Police News

2/29: Joseph Arcata, 35, of 1208 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, was charged with DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane, State Police said.

Andover Police News

3/1: Lori Ann Gaudino, 51, of 11 Taverner Rd., Windsor, was charged with DUI and improper parking, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

3/4: Jillian Jagielo, 28, of 551 Hope Valley Rd., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

3/4: Derrick Martin, 21, of 100 Country Ln., was charged with DUI, traveling at an unreasonable speed and making an improper turn, State Police said.

3/5: Joshua Serra, 23, of 158 Grayville Rd., was charged with first-degree assault, threatening, disorderly conduct and unlawful discharge of firearms, State Police said.

3/5: Zacharia Sheehan, 20, of 835 Gilead St., was charged with third-degree assault, first-degree criminal trespassing and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

Colchester Police News

2/29: Kenneth Jovin, 51, of 84 Cove Rd., Amston, was charged with DUI, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, improper use of registration, operating a motor vehicle with registration/license suspended/refused/revoked and speeding, State Police said.

3/1: Coty Rugar, 24, of 9 Brooke Hill Rd., East Haddam, was charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, no front license plate, misuse of license plates and no motor vehicle insurance, State Police said.

3/1: Jon Murray, 47, of 41 Lewiston Ave., Willimantic, was charged with third-degree larceny, State Police said.

3/4: Ryan Urciuloi, 19, of 40 Deer Meadow

East Hampton Police News

2/22: Daniel Cook, 48, of 1 Young St., was issued a summons for illegal burning, East Hampton Police said.

2/26: John R. Forbes, 25, of 38 Burke Rd., Vernon, was arrested for violating a restraining order, disorderly conduct, interfering/resisting arrest and interfering with an emergency call, police said.

2/27: Scott Michael Latronica, 29, of 215 E.H. Colchester Tpke., East Haddam, was arrested for third-degree assault, disorderly conduct and interfering with an emergency call, police said.

2/28: Sarah Peckham, 38, of 30 Babcock Rd., East Haddam, was issued a summons for evading responsibility, police said.

Ln., Hebron, was charged with DUI, illegal window tinting and failure to drive right, State Police said.

3/5: Michael Persaud, 32, of 33 Washington Rd., Marlborough, was charged with third-degree assault and breach of peace, State Police said.

3/5: Stanley Knight, 42, of 225 McCall Rd., Lebanon, was charged with DUI, State Police said.

3/6: Chad Olshan, 36, of 94 Cottage Rd., Madison, was charged with criminal trespassing, possession of burglary tools, tampering with a motor vehicle and criminal attempt, State Police said.