

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 37, Number 40

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

January 18, 2013



Happy Birthday, Polly!...The Circle K Farm, located at 92 Young St., held a special birthday party last Saturday, Jan. 12, for Polly, the farm's dromedary camel who turned 5 on Monday, Jan. 14. Shown are the farm's co-owner, Mary Krogh, and, holding the cake, Bryce Bailey, 6, of East Hampton.

Fake Bomb Planted at Middle School

by Joshua Anusewicz

East Hampton police arrested two residents last weekend that allegedly placed a fake bomb at an entrance of East Hampton Middle School.

According to a news release from Sgt. Michael Green, the package was discovered in the morning hours of Saturday, Jan. 12, by school custodians, who noticed a strange package near the front entrance of the school as they were preparing to open the building for a youth basketball league.

Officers Michael Salafia and Hardie Burgin and Sgt. Paul Battista responded to the scene shortly after 8:30 a.m., where they spotted a red and orange box with a timing device attached to it, Green said.

Green said the school was immediately locked down and the area was secured, as local fire and EMS personnel were summoned to the scene. The Connecticut State Police Bomb Squad was then called in, he continued, to investigate the suspicious item; after examining and x-raying the package, Green stated that the technicians determined that the "bomb" was a fake, and did not contain any explosives.

The school was then swept for any other dangerous items – of which none were found – and reopened.



Sean Doran



Kyla Sypek

The police then inspected the school's security camera footage, Green said, which showed that a silver, four-door vehicle had pulled up to the front entrance of the school at around 1:45 a.m. When the car pulled up, a white male wearing a plaid flannel shirt allegedly exited the vehicle with the fake bomb in hand, placed it in front of the doors, then returned to the vehicle and drove away.

From the surveillance footage, Salafia was able to identify the suspect as Sean Doran, 20, of 59 S. Main St.; the release stated that Doran was known to date Kayla Sypek, 20, of 17 Staeth Rd., who drives a silver Toyota Corolla that matched the vehicle shown in the security tape.

A subsequent search for the two individuals by East Hampton Police ended in a motor vehicle stop around 12:30 p.m., when Burgin spotted the silver vehicle on Staeth Road. Sypek was allegedly operating the vehicle, with Doran – wearing the same plaid shirt as in the video – and Sypek's 2-year-old daughter as passengers.

According to Green, Doran and Sypek admitted to Burgin they had been at the school earlier and planted the fake bomb. They were then placed under arrest and transported to the

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WJJMS Project Pegged at \$68.5 Million

by Melissa Roberto

The cost estimates are in for the Colchester building project that would incorporate William J. Johnston Middle School, the town senior center and a new community center in one building – and town officials admit the estimates are steep.

Tecton Architects has estimated the work to cost \$68,500,828, the building committee behind the project announced at its Jan. 10 meeting.

Construction of the project includes the removal of the 1954 eighth-grade wing which would create space for playing fields, and removal of the school's portables. New parking lots would be designed for WJJMS and the senior center with separate entrances for each.

The total cost estimate is broken down into three separate costs: \$48,101,171 for the school renovation and expansion; \$15,317,563 to incorporate the community center; and \$5,082,093 for the senior center.

Construction work at WJJMS would include renovations to the current school and a three-story addition. The existing building would house the sixth grade in the western wing, while the addition would include both seventh and

eighth grades on the second and third floor.

The \$48,101,171 estimate of the school addition and renovation is a total of two numbers: an estimated state reimbursement of \$20,640,793 which leaves the final estimated cost to the town at \$27,460,378.

The entire estimate of the school work is then broken down into eight costs: \$14,801,081 for the three-story school addition, \$8,699,683 for the renovation of the current WJJMS west wing; \$404,000 for the renovation of one of the existing gyms; \$1,502,914 for a new lower parking lot; \$365,790 for the resurfacing of the existing parking lot; \$136,911 for the disposal of portable classrooms; \$250,384 for demolition of the eighth grade classroom wing; and \$1,405,668 for new playing fields.

The existing building would also house a community center, which would include Parks and Recreation, Social Services and Youth Services Departments. The Parks and Recreation Department would use the existing gym and the Youth Services Department would include a game room, counseling room, technology room, lounge and library.

The \$15,317,563 estimate for the commu-

nity center is broken down into three categories: \$6,626,250 for renovation of existing space; \$591,450 for the renovation of one of the existing gyms; and \$1,023,750 for the new addition of a walkway.

The proposed senior center would be located in the former cafeteria wing of the current middle school. The senior center would include a variety of services: a bistro/café, gift shop, lounge, counseling space, library, health room, hair salon, fitness room, offices, restrooms and storage. It would also take advantage of the existing kitchen, cafeteria, classrooms and loading dock.

The senior center cost estimate is projected at \$5,082,093. That total is then broken down into three separate costs: \$2,332,600 for renovation of existing space; \$190,571 for the new parking lot; and \$211,194 for the new road to be used as a separate entrance for the senior center.

Facilities Director Greg Plunkett said it seemed the committee members felt the cost estimate was "higher than they anticipated."

However, Plunkett said the committee is now interested in identifying "places where things

could be reduced."

Building Committee member Anthony Tarnowski said he intends to review the numbers more closely before the next committee meeting, but that his general reaction to the estimate was similar to other committee members. "It was a little bit higher than what I was expecting but it didn't knock me over," Tarnowski said.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster indicated the price tag was high – but stressed it was not a death blow for the project.

"In my opinion [the cost is] outside of the price range that Colchester can afford but that doesn't mean that the project is not going forward," Schuster said. "I'm sure we are going to have a lengthy discussion of what should and should not be included."

Several residents have pushed for a pool to be part of the project, but Schuster wanted to hold off, as he felt the project was large enough. After seeing the cost estimates, the first selectman still feels this is the best course of action.

"I've always been against including a pool in this project but I think it might be prudent to

See WJJMS Project Page 2



The fake bomb planted at East Hampton Middle School was found amid a pile of debris at a paintball facility in town.

Fake Bomb cont. from Front Page

East Hampton Police Department.

Doran and Sypek were each charged with first-degree reckless endangerment, first-degree threatening, and first-degree breach of peace, all of which are felony charges. Green added that authorities from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) are also conducting an investigation into the case and Doran and Sypek could face federal charges, as well.

Green said a preliminary investigation revealed the two suspects obtained the fake bomb from a pile of debris at Strategy Plus Paintball on Bear Swamp Road, where similar debris was later found that was consistent with the materials used to make the fake bomb.

All of the other schools in town were searched for any dangerous items, but none were found, Green said. He called the matter “an isolated

incident” and there were no reported issues at the schools as of Thursday.

Both suspects were held on \$100,000 bond and were released after arraignment at Middletown Superior Court on Monday, Jan. 14. Following the arraignment, the father of Doran, Steven Doran, 50, was arrested and charged with second-degree criminal mischief and third-degree assault after allegedly striking a reporter from *The Middletown Press* outside of the courthouse. Steven Doran is reportedly expected to be arraigned on Thursday, Jan. 24, at Middletown Superior Court.

Sean Doran and Sypek are scheduled to appear in court to enter their plea on Monday, Feb. 4, at 10 a.m. at Middletown Superior Court.

WJMS Project cont. from Front Page

dedicate space for it [in the schematic design] as a future addition,” Schuster said Tuesday.

Including a pool in the schematic design was a topic that was also discussed at the Jan. 3 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Schuster said Building Committee Chairman Thomas Tyler recently informed the selectmen that simply including the pool in the schematic design plan for the project would cost an extra \$9,750.

Schuster added that the committee and other Town boards will discuss ways to decrease the cost of the overall project, and will also think about ways to phase construction of the project so it is not all done at once.

Schuster said the boards of selectmen, finance and education are in the process of scheduling a joint meeting in February to discuss the entire estimate and its breakdowns with the building committee.

In a press release issued Monday, the Building Committee stressed the importance of the project. It warned that, if the work is not ap-

proved, “the town will need to spend a significant sum of money over the next several years to address immediate building concerns [at WJMS] including heating, ventilation, cooling, windows, bathrooms and other vital infrastructure needs.”

The committee also said that while the cost is “very significant,” there are “valid reasons” to move forward with the project.

“It fulfills needs of nearly all segments of the population of town citizens,” the committee wrote, “including students, families and seniors; provides a quality environment to compliment the quality education our children receive; offers our seniors a location to call their own and provide room for services they need and deserve; and delivers space that all residents could take advantage of.”

The Building Committee will next meet to discuss the project Thursday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m., at WJMS. The public is invited to attend and offer comments.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I was looking forward to last Wednesday because I was anxious to hear about my all-time favorite baseball player, former New York Met Mike Piazza. Piazza was eligible for the Hall of Fame, and I wanted to see if he'd be elected and if I'd be making the drive to Cooperstown in July for his induction ceremony.

When the news came down that he wasn't elected, I was sad and angry – but, truth be told, not completely surprised.

A year or two ago, I'd have thought him to be a shoo-in, just as I did during his playing days. I was fortunate to see Piazza play live many times during his Met years of 1998-2005, and there wasn't a doubt in my mind I was seeing the greatest hitting catcher of all time. After he retired, the only question in my mind was: would he wear a Dodgers cap on his Hall of Fame plaque, or a Mets one? (Yes, he came up with the Dodgers, won Rookie of the Year with them and had some fantastic seasons, but he had fantastic seasons with the Mets too, and literally carried the team on his back to the playoffs in back-to-back years – including a pennant-winning 2000 season. Piazza had said he wanted to go in as a Met – but Major League Baseball makes that call, not the players.)

But then the steroid scandal blew up, and lots of people – myself included – said they frankly couldn't endorse guys like Barry Bonds or Roger Clemens for the Hall of Fame because, while their numbers were great, they also seemed steroid-driven. Bonds admitted to using steroids, although he has denied knowingly doing so. Clemens has had witnesses implicate him of juicing, though he personally has denied using them. Mark McGwire has openly admitted using steroids, and he isn't anywhere close to the number of votes needed for HOF induction. Alex Rodriguez has admitted to using in the past, and there have also been plenty of people who say that, despite whatever career numbers he has when he retires, they'll never vote for him.

All of a sudden, I started to worry about Piazza. There's never been any indication he used steroids to put up his amazing power numbers. Oh, people have tried over the years; perhaps the most famous attempted indictment was by *New York Times* reporter Murray Chass, who used the presence of back acne as indication Piazza was a juicer. (Which, really, was just stupid; you spend multiple hours a day for six months – including the summer months – crouched behind a plate with loads of catcher's equipment on and tell me your back doesn't get sweaty. And sweat tends to beget acne.) Moreover, his career followed the normal path of a catcher's; he broke down in his mid-30s, as catchers tend to do. He certainly didn't get better as he closed in on his 40s, as was the case with Bonds and Clemens.

But still, I worried. What if people painted him with the broad steroid brush, simply because he happened to put up great power numbers during what is now known as the steroid era? What if it was a case of guilt by association?

Last Wednesday, my worries came true, as Piazza did not get elected – nor did anyone else.

The fact that no one got elected truly surprised me. It seemed the Baseball Writers Association of America – the group that decides who goes into the Hall and who doesn't – had opted to take a stand against the steroid era. Everyone's a suspect, they seemed to figure, so no one gets in.

Which, I'm sorry, is crap. Every player's case is unique. Guys like Piazza and Connecticut native Jeff Bagwell – also denied entrance last week – were never accused by others on the record of using steroids. They were never named in the Mitchell report – an exhaustive document released in 2007 that identified scores of current and former Major Leaguers as steroid users. They never went on trial. Surely, there can be varying degrees here. Not everything needs to be so black and white.

I think Piazza will get in eventually. It may not be next year – as the list of names on the 2013 ballot will include such names as Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine, Jeff Kent and Frank Thomas, in addition to all the other names that were up for vote this year – but I'm sure it will happen.

Still, it should've been this year.
* * *

I was surprised and saddened to hear over the weekend about the passing of Bob Kodym. I think it's safe to say Bob, a Colchester resident, was a pretty well-known figure to *Rivereast* readers, particularly fans of the letters to the editor section. Bob was a regular in that section for years; he might not send a letter a week but generally at least once a month. He'd occasionally take a break from sending in letters, but the break would never last too long, and he'd soon be back, addressing a variety of topics, usually of national and international interest, and he'd always sign the letters the same way: “Cordially, Robert J. Kodym.”

Readers would occasionally poke fun at Bob's propensity for big words and, well, his fondness of ellipses. But Bob never seemed to take things too personally; he never let it deter him from sending letters in, and he never changed his writing style either.

Yes, Bob seemed to be enamored of his style, and truth be told, he had every reason to be. Bob was an accomplished, award-winning writer, with two novels under his belt, and had works published in several anthologies. He was a seven-time nominee for International Poet of the Year. Bob's first book of blank verse, *Of Bale*, was published in early 2010. Bob was gracious enough to give me an autographed first edition.

During my time as editor of the *Rivereast*, Bob would call me up from time to time, ostensibly to ask me if I'd received a letter he'd sent, but basically just to chat. I'll admit, sometimes he'd talk my ear off, but the chats were more often than not very pleasant. Regular readers of both his letters and my column will likely not be surprised to learn we shared a lot of the same political views – but more than that, Bob just came across as a nice guy.

And so, it's with sadness that I say farewell to Bob Kodym; may he rest in peace. The letters to the editor pages truly will not be the same without him.

* * *

See you next week.

Hebron Acting Superintendent Veronesi Details Response to Sandy Hook

by Geeta Schrayter

For Kathy Veronesi, the Board of Education meeting last Thursday, Jan. 10, was her debut as acting superintendent. It was also her first opportunity to speak publicly about the district's response to the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

The tragedy occurred on former schools superintendent Ellie Cruz's last day in office, Dec. 14. As per Veronesi's contract, her time as acting superintendent started at midnight Dec. 15 – and work began right away.

That day, Veronesi met with the resident state trooper, a local minister and school psychologists for support getting information out to the public. During the following week, in addition to there being an increased police presence at the schools, AHM Youth and Family Services provided an extra counselor to support the psy-

chologists in assisting anyone who may need it, and the administration provided coffee, tea and pastries for the staff.

“We wanted people to feel comfortable,” Veronesi said.

Group discussions were also held with each grade level at Hebron Elementary School, where students learned about the different ways they're kept safe at school. Then, the following Tuesday, there was a meeting to discuss safety protocols and procedures. While no glaring safety needs presented themselves at that meeting, Veronesi said on a “macro-level” there needed to be a “town-wide concerted effort” to communicate and look at all types of emergencies and how to prepare for and prevent them “so there are more consistent processes across

the town.”

Additionally, Veronesi said purchasing a new set of walkie-talkies would have a positive impact on safety. She said they were an “integral part” of what occurs at the schools on a daily basis.

“And the truth of the matter is we're kind of limping along with the set we have,” she said. Most of the current two-way radios were purchased in 2006. “That's kind of an immediate foundational need for the community that I think has an impact on safety.”

A new set of walkie-talkies would cost close to \$9,000, and while board member Amy Lynch-Gracias said the purchase didn't qualify for the Capital Improvement Plan because it wasn't high enough (items need to be \$25,000

or more to be considered for CIP funding), she mentioned the district might be able to find a group purchasing opportunity through the state. Veronesi added there might be a possibility to pay for them out of capital outlay or with a supplemental appropriation. She added there wasn't an immediate need for the replacement of the entire set of 40, but maybe 10.

Veronesi said the possibility of installing buzzers under people's desks in the front office was also being looked at. She added assuring parents and the community that the district was paying attention and acting in response to the Newtown tragedy was essential, but it was also important not to divulge all the details surrounding safety procedures at the school, as that itself could prove dangerous.

RHAM Students to Get Bonus Sleep-In Days

by Geeta Schrayter

During the 2013-14 school year – and continuing into at least part of the following year – RHAM middle and high school students will have an extra day to sleep in each month.

The RHAM Board of Education voted unanimously Monday to have 90-minute delayed openings once per month during the 2013-14 school year, to allow faculty time needed to prepare for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation process.

“Teachers will report at the regular time,” Siminski said, “so they can begin that work and have some time to do it. Otherwise, there’s not enough time with just the professional development days.”

Siminski added Wednesday the delays were important because without them, the number of professional development days would have to be increased, “which would have an impact on the budget.”

He said staff needs to do “extensive reports” to prepare for the high school’s self-study – a key part of the NEASC accreditation process – and the district wants to ensure the reports “are done on time and present the school in the best light.”

The process is expected to take 18 months, meaning the once-a-month delayed openings will last through the fall semester of the 2014-15 year.

In 2015, NEASC officials are expected at the school to decide if they can maintain their accreditation.

To accommodate for the delay, Siminski explained arrangements have been made with the bus company for them to first pick up children for the elementary schools, and then go for the

RHAM students. Currently, RHAM students are picked up first, and then the elementary students.

* * *

Also at Monday’s meeting, school board members learned how benchmark assessments are used to aid in the continuous improvement of students.

Social Studies teacher Tina Forsberg presented to the board and explained how writing assessments are used to measure student skills. These assessments are evaluated using a clear rubric that determines whether a student is performing “exemplary,” “proficient,” “needs improvement” or is “limited” in different areas. The data are then tracked in order to help inform how instruction should be designed and monitor student learning.

Forsberg also explained some of the changes that are taking place in regards to teaching practices. She said student assignments are being matched to the core skills they utilize, which allows a student to be scored on each accordingly. Some of these skills include interpreting visual data, reading for information and using multiple reasons and specific facts to build an argument. Forsberg said looking at the assignments at such an in-depth level allows for the students to be provided with specific feedback. They can be told what their areas of strength are as well as areas they need to work on and different ways they can improve.

In addition, she said there is a move away from the use of textbooks to more work with authentic sources such as museum and news websites. Forsberg also stated that the quantity of student assignments is being reduced, in an effort to improve quality. There will be fewer

small, relatively short homework assignments; instead, the assignments will be broader and larger in scope. As a result, students will need to learn to balance their schedules to allow themselves proper time to deal with these bigger assignments. Students will also be afforded the opportunity to access help if they so desire and the expectations for these assignments will be higher.

After Forsberg, another presentation was given explaining how Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Testing and a program called SchoolNet are used as further attempts to evaluate and monitor student progress.

On Wednesday, Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski called NWEA Testing a “growth-screening instrument,” and said the best way to describe it was “a complete academic physical in the areas of math and language arts.” He explained the tests, which are given three times to students in seventh grade, allow teachers to “zero in” on kids who are performing on the lower end of the scale and provide them with extra help. Their progress is then monitored by the administration through additional tests given in grades eight, nine and 10.

The testing adapts to each student based on their responses; if a question is answered correctly, the following question will be more difficult. If they answer incorrectly, the next question will be easier. NWEA Testing captures details on what a student currently knows and what they’ll be ready to learn next.

This is the first year RHAM Middle School is using NWEA, and Principal Mike Seroussi said the school was about to start the second round

of testing. The first was a “baseline assessment,” while the next round will provide more information on student growth. He said the testing would take place this week and the next.

In addition to benchmark assessments and NWEA Testing, the regional school district uses SchoolNet, which Siminski called a “data aggregator.”

The program provides information on both the macro and micro-level; performance indicators are provided for administrators on the district level along with individual student information such as their current and historical grades, benchmark and state data and school enrollment and attendance.

All of the students’ information is combined “so we have a body of knowledge on each student in one place and then can have a learning plan based on that,” Siminski said.

In addition to gathering information, SchoolNet allows teachers to create and monitor assessments and put together intervention plans and reports. The program also reminds teachers to monitor the academic progress of particular students who need interventions and extra support.

Siminski also stressed the accessibility the program provides to teachers. Since all the data on a student is in one place, “teachers can access it easily then design the instructional program for a student’s needs. That’s the real benefit of it.”

* * *

The next RHAM Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 25, at 6:30 p.m. in the RHAM High School Chorus Room.

New Indoor Baseball Facility Swings into Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

Residents will have a chance to pick up their bats and put on their gloves before the baseball season even begins this year, at the town’s new indoor baseball and softball training and instruction facility, The Cage.

Open since Dec. 3, The Cage offers cage rentals, individual and group instruction, team training, camps and clinics – and even birthday parties – to individuals of all ages and skill levels.

The Cage is located at 181 Upton Rd. Unit E, and offers an indoor training experience year-round, Monday-Friday from 5-9 p.m. and weekends 10 a.m.-4 p.m. or by appointment.

Co-owners and longtime friends Chris Ferrante and Greg Fearon said The Cage is a business they have wanted to open for years.

“We just want to introduce the game of baseball because it’s been drifting away with the electronics that are out there,” said Fearon.

The opportunity to open The Cage unfolded quickly after Ferrante and Fearon’s friend Mike Turgeon closed his Mike Turgeon’s Batting School in Norwich. Turgeon sold his equipment to the two, who started work on the business in town shortly thereafter.

The two residents opened The Cage in Colchester because they said they saw a need in the community for an indoor baseball and softball business. They stressed that the closest indoor batting cages are found in Hartford, East Hartford, Columbia, East Lyme and Groton.

The 3,600-square-foot facility includes three separate batting cages that can also turn into one major practice area for individual or group lessons.

A smaller room in the facility also features a mounted television, where Ferrante and Fearon give players an opportunity to view their recorded sessions.

“Recording lessons helps us show players what their strengths and weaknesses are,” said Ferrante.

The Cage is home to a variety of training tools, from Iron Mike pitching machines to beginner T-ball stands that help players of any skill level adapt to the sport indoors.

While walk-ins are possible through 30-minute or 60-minute cage rentals, players can also learn or improve on hitting, pitching, in-field or ground ball training, catching and fine mechanical needs in individual or group lessons.

However, technical skills aren’t the only

skills Ferrante and Fearon assist players in. They both agreed that mental skills are just as valuable to a player.

“A lot of it is mental,” said Ferrante of the game. “We teach what players should be thinking in certain situations and what they should be looking for based on style.”

Facilitating camps and clinics are also a part of Ferrante and Fearon’s teaching methods, which are organized based on the ages and skill levels of players.

“We get to see kids from all over,” said Ferrante.

Entering into their second month at the business, the owners have already assisted players from Salem, East Hampton, Lebanon, Colchester and Norwich.

In addition to players, The Cage also provides training for people interested in coaching baseball or softball. Coaching clinics include training in running practices, setting up training drills and game management.

Safety is another aspect Ferrante and Fearon take seriously at The Cage. Players under the age of 18 are required to wear helmets and face masks during any time the machines are employed.

At least one of the owners is near the machines “at all times” in the cages, Ferrante added.

In addition to the switches inside and outside of the cages, owners also have a master shut-off button they can override if necessary.

Although no licensure was needed to open the business, Ferrante and Fearon have dedicated a majority of their lives to baseball, and have years of experience as players and coaches to assist them in the business.

The two started playing baseball at the age of 4, and advanced through high school and college until their chances of advancing professionally were cut short due to injuries.

But that did not stop the two from loving the game.

Ferrante began his coaching career in 1991 while living in Toms River, N.J., as the head coach of the Toms River Black Sox. He also began coaching the Toms River East Little League in 1998 and held both positions until 2001, when he moved to Colchester.

In Colchester, Ferrante served as the deputy commissioner of the Colchester Little League from 2003 to 2010. He became president of the league in 2010 and has held the position ever since. He is also the head coach of the Colchester men’s baseball team, the Colchester



The Cage, an indoor baseball and softball training and instruction facility, opened in Colchester last month. Here, one of the instructors, Mike Turgeon, serves up a pitch to Richard Falvey of Salem.

Thunder, made up of players 30 years old and older.

Fearon began his coaching career at Glastonbury High School coaching baseball and hockey in 1984 and 1985. He was also the baseball director of the Colchester Little League from 2004 to 2008 and head coach of the Eastern Connecticut AAU team, The Crush, in 2009 and 2010.

The two are also head coaches of the 14-U and 19-U AAU team called the Connecticut Dirt Bags. Ferrante launched the Dirt Bags six years ago, and the two coaches led the 19-U team to a championship last year.

Ferrante and Fearon have full-time jobs in addition to their work at The Cage. But they admitted The Cage isn’t a business they opened for themselves, but rather for “the kids.”

“I like to watch the little kids walk through the door and see a smile on their faces,” said Fearon.

Working at the cage each night and on weekends is also something the two view as more of a hobby than work.

“One of the reasons I’m involved is because I still love the game,” said Ferrante.

The two owners also have enjoyed watching their own children play the game. Ferrante has two sons, 4-year-old Joseph and 3-year-old Nicholas; and has already introduced them to the sport. Fearon’s 20-year-old daughter, Tori, plays softball at Castleton State College of Vermont, while his 18-year-old son, Thomas, plays baseball at Suffolk University in Boston.

The owners are currently offering several discounts on cage rentals, individual and group instructions in the upcoming months, and encourage current high school players to take advantage of their six-week conditioning program starting in February.

Most of all, the owners explain that their indoor venue is one that they hope to see players take advantage of year-round as a way to improve and learn the game.

“We just want people to enjoy the game as much as we do,” said Ferrante.

For more information on The Cage, readers can check out the business’ Facebook page or visit thecage-ct.com.

To speak with the owners directly, call 860-537-9900.

Grant Received for Colchester Conservation of 53 Acres

by Melissa Roberto

With the help of the Colchester Land Trust, a \$160,000 grant from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection was received to go towards the purchase and conservation of 53 acres of open space on Brainard Road in Colchester.

Located in the southeast corner of Colchester, the space is part of the watershed that flows into the Deep River Reservoir, the primary reservoir for Norwich, which provides the town with approximately three million gallons of water daily.

Due to the proximity of the reservoir, Norwich Public Utilities (NPU), a gas, water, electric and sewer utility for the town of Norwich, is interested in purchasing the property, as it already owns the reservoir and other acres of property surrounding it.

The idea to conserve the land was spearheaded by CLT president Andy George. The

CLT first learned that the property was up for sale 18 months ago, when the group received an email from a resident who recognized a sign advertising the property.

CLT is made up of a group of volunteers whose mission is to protect and preserve open space in the town of Colchester. In this case, CLT was responsible for contacting what it felt was the appropriate party that would be interested in purchasing the land.

"Norwich Public Utilities owns the reservoir and land around it, so they were the logical group to take ownership of that property," said George.

George said it has been a collaborative effort between the CLT, the Town of Colchester, NPU, realtor and property owner to move forward in the efforts to preserve the land.

NPU applied for a grant through the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant

Program in March 2011 and received confirmation of the \$160,000 grant at the end of last month.

NPU Operations Manager Chris LaRose said NPU was "absolutely" pleased to receive the grant because "we'd really like the opportunity to protect the whole watershed property."

The 53 acres of property also includes a vacant house, which LaRose said NPU is not interested in owning. "It could be sold separately or it could be demolished," he said, adding that it was still something that needs to be discussed with the property owner.

While the grant has been issued and NPU's interest in the 53 acres is certain, LaRose said the price is still being negotiated between the property owner and a five-person board of NPU employees that is responsible for governing the company's budgets.

LaRose said he expects both parties to reach

an agreement in a few weeks.

As for the property, LaRose confirmed that it cannot be changed and that it would only be protected, which is also a requirement that comes along with the DEEP grant.

Since its formation in 2002, the CLT has conserved about 200 acres of property in Colchester.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster said he is "very happy" any time the town is able to preserve open space, and is especially pleased with the efforts taken to receive the \$160,000 grant.

"This piece is strategically located with other parcels of open space and really is a great move by Colchester and the state of Connecticut," Schuster said.

LaRose said he expects both parties to reach an agreement on the price of the 53 acres in a few weeks.

Marlborough Selectmen Appoint New Fire Commissioner

by Melissa Roberto

When Walter A. "Mike" Kelly, the town's fire commissioner since the 1970s, died last November, town officials anticipated filling his shoes would be difficult.

But the Board of Selectmen on Tuesday found a replacement, appointing resident Michael E. Schadtler to fill Kelly's former spot. Kelly passed away from pneumonia Nov. 7 at the age of 69.

The fire commissioner is responsible for purchasing equipment and acting as the liaison between the fire department and Town Hall. Schadtler first expressed interest in the position to the selectmen on Nov. 13 via email.

He attended Tuesday's Board of Selectmen meeting and informed the selectmen that he has been a Marlborough resident all of his life and has become involved in the town.

Schadtler has been a member of the volunteer Marlborough Fire Department for 26 years and within those years he served as fire captain and served on "several committees including the committees for Engine 1 and Engine 2," he stated in the email.

"I know you've done a lot of service," First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski told Schadtler Tuesday.

Outside of the fire department, Schadtler has been a service utility representative for Connecticut Natural Gas since 1989. He also completed six years of training with the U.S. Army Reserve 76th Infantry Division and was "hon-

orably discharged" as a Sergeant E-5 in March 1990, he stated in the email.

Gaudinski said Fire Chief Bill Lord and fire commissioner Doug Thibodeau each recommended Schadtler's appointment as fire commissioner to the selectmen, which selectman Dick Shea added were "excellent recommendations."

Also at Tuesday's meeting, the selectmen approved attorney Adam J. Cohen to represent the office of the Tax Collector.

The town's tax collector, Barbara C. Murray, recommended Cohen to the selectmen on Tuesday and said Cohen works as a partner in the litigation department of Pullman & Comley, LLC in Bridgeport, and as corporate counsel to the Connecticut Tax Collectors Association.

"He's very well known and respected in the [Connecticut] Tax Collectors Association," said Murray.

Murray added that Cohen will conduct tax collections on delinquent accounts without charging the town, and that she is able to make phone calls to him without receiving a charge per phone call.

Also at Tuesday's meeting, Gaudinski updated the board with a change in terms of the service used for the town's online database of properties. The new vendor for the town's Geographical Information System (GIS) parcel data and tax maps is AppGeo. The program allows people to view their property field cards online, which Gaudinski said should help alleviate traf-

fic in the Assessor's office. The online data will also be updated nightly to provide accurate and up-to-date information.

Gaudinski also told the board that she recently signed the contract with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) for a town-wide prescription discount card program that was approved by the selectmen in early November.

The prescription discount card program will provide discounts on prescriptions to all residents of Marlborough. Each resident will receive a discount card in the mail, no matter if the individual is underinsured or has no insurance at all. The card provides discounts on prescription medications, and also comes into effect for vision care, Lasik surgery, hearing aids and hearing testing.

"I think our residents will benefit from this program," said Gaudinski, adding that she hopes "senior citizens that fall into the doughnut hole gap" will take advantage of it.

The selectmen also discussed possible changes of positions in the town's Public Works Department. Gaudinski proposed the idea of combining two current positions in the department, the Public Works Supervisor of Highway and Fleet that has been vacant since May and the Public Works Supervisor for Buildings and Grounds. Combining those two positions would create the Public Works Supervisor of Opera-

tions title, Gaudinski explained.

She proposed another new "mid-level" position to be added to the Department of Public Works Supervisor.

The topic was tabled to the next selectmen meeting.

Gaudinski also updated the board with the current status of Phase 2 of the Stage Harbor Health Care Center sewer expansion project. She explained that the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has received the town's request for the project that was submitted last month. Gaudinski communicated to the selectmen that DEEP needs to approve the request before the town goes out to bid.

Lastly, the selectmen approved three resignations to boards and commissions. Corrine Chappelle resigned as a member the Board of Education effective immediately due to moving out of state; John M. Valentine resigned as member and chairman of the Marlborough Zoning Board of Appeals due to him moving out of town; and John Monstream resigned from the Conservation Commission, of which he was a "longstanding member," Gaudinski said.

Gaudinski reminded the selectmen that for the next two months the budget will be discussed at each regular Board of Selectmen meeting. The next such meeting will occur Tuesday, Feb. 5, 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Sklarz Presents \$7.37 Million Marlborough Budget

by Melissa Roberto

At the Jan. 10 Board of Education meeting, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz presented a proposed budget of \$7,367,484 for the 2013-14 year.

The proposal is a 2.33 percent increase, or \$167,424, over the current year's \$7,200,060 spending plan.

The meeting was the board's first glance at the proposed budget and what Sklarz called a "broad overview" of a budget proposal he was happy with.

Sklarz told the board the focus of developing the 2013-14 budget was to "put things back in the budget that needed to be here."

Sklarz said that each of the past four years, the board has made short-term reductions board members agreed the district could "do without" for one year at a time. However, the short-term reductions left – and still leaves – the board with the task of placing items back into the budget when financially feasible, he said.

Those short-term budget reductions over the last four years included decreases in advertising, independent evaluations, printing and binding, emergency repair contingency, meetings and conferences, dues and membership fees, technology/computer network services, professional development, library books/textbooks and instructional supplies.

"We have made some sacrifices year after year," said Sklarz. "Eventually those little things will need to come back."

Sklarz said items put back into the 2013-14 budget that were once short-term reductions include professional development, instructional supplies and curriculum development, which are all items that Sklarz said are needed to align

with the Common Core State Standards.

Although Sklarz provided the board with a list of mandates that the district are required to pay, the Common Core implementation was one he set apart from the rest and attached the word "expensive" to. "There's no other word to describe it," he said.

While the board recently received news of a projected decline in enrollment at Marlborough Elementary School by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) to take place over the next five years, Sklarz said the number of students receiving special education services and the enrollment of students in magnet schools have gone up which will affect next year's budget.

The number of students receiving special education services has risen from 46 to 66 students in the last four years, Sklarz said. "We need to maintain that staff," he added.

Also, there are currently 11 students enrolled in magnet schools. "Three years ago that number was at zero," said Sklarz, adding that the number 11 was a "big surprise" this year.

The tuitions of magnet school students were not included in the 2012-13 budget, Sklarz said. But in a November 2012 meeting, the board agreed to include the tuition of eight magnet school students to the 2013-14 budget. At a tuition cost of \$3,925 per student, that adds \$31,400 to the 2013-14 budget.

To stay in line with the projected decline of MES students, however, Sklarz said the school will see two trends in the upcoming years: smaller class sizes and a reduction in the amount of classes per grade.

Already, Sklarz said, there will be an elimination of one class section in one grade for the 2013-14 school year. He added that this reduction will come at an "appropriate time," as two teachers are planning to retire at the end of the current year and one will not be replaced.

The retirement that will not be replaced will guarantee an approximate \$80,000 savings in the 2013-14 budget.

Sklarz also said the district's ranking in per pupil expenditure for the 2011-12 year was "pretty flat." However, Sklarz said thanks to the quality of teachers in the school, all students by the sixth grade have been outscoring some of the "most expensive districts" and some of the most high performing districts" in the state.

Sklarz also pointed out one aspect of the budget he made room for: school safety and security.

In its previous meeting on Dec. 20, the board discussed updating the current buzz-in system at the school to include newer cameras to provide better visuals. The board was also concerned with the glass doors at the school's entrance.

Sklarz said he added \$20,000 in the budget for school safety "so we can make sure that we never have to say that we can't afford to do something that's going to make the school safer for our children and adults in the building."

The \$20,000 for safety and security is included in the capital outlay account, an account that covers new or replacement furniture/equipment for the school.

Sklarz also said the highest number in the proposed budget – the personnel account for

certified staff – has decreased by 2.98 percent at a total of \$4,164,682. The decrease is due to newer teachers coming in at lesser salaries, Sklarz said.

A number that Sklarz said may "jump out" to the board is the 22.92 percent increase in health benefits. "It's been an unusual year," he said, adding that several people in the district are on worker's compensation.

Lastly, Sklarz gave credit to the board's "conscious" decisions on electricity and bus contracts, which are part of two purchased services accounts in the budget that have decreased.

"We got a really good rate on the bus transportation contract," Sklarz said, of the 2013-14 one-year contract with Nichols Bus Company.

Resident Rich Storrs told the board he would like to see the Spanish program back into the budget. The Spanish program was eliminated last year, with the intention to revise and reinstate it when the board saw fit.

"These children deserve to have their needs met...including foreign language and instruction," said Storrs.

While several residents responded negatively to the Spanish program cut last year during the development of the 2012-13 budget, on Tuesday Sklarz said a Board of Education subcommittee has been formed called World Languages and Cultures that is currently studying options to offer an afterschool or summer program for students to learn foreign languages.

Budget workshops are scheduled to take place later this month and into February, with the first one scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m., at MES.

Court Dismisses Claims Against Former Marlborough Selectmen

by Melissa Roberto

The United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit has dismissed two federal claims against former Marlborough selectmen William Black, Riva Clark and Joseph LaBella brought by former town building official Patrick Looney.

The lawsuit Looney filed in 2010 stated his two federal claims: one against then-First Selectman William Black for violation of free speech rights and another claim against all of the selectmen for violation of due process rights.

On Dec. 21, however, the Second Circuit determined that Looney's two federal claims against the selectmen were both, in its words, "groundless." The Second Circuit also determined that the selectmen were entitled to qualified immunity, which overruled a decision made prior by the District Court that determined the selectmen were not entitled to qualified immunity.

Looney was Marlborough's building official from 1994 to 2010. According to the lawsuit, Looney first learned about the Building Official position from a notice that advertised the position as full-time with benefits.

Looney was consecutively reappointed four times since his initial appointment in 1994.

On April 5, 2010, however, Looney filed an intent to sue against the town of Marlborough and the selectmen after receiving notification that his hours were reduced from full-time to part-time and following a grievance he issued with the town against his supervisor in October 2009.

In his intent to sue, Looney alleged his hours were cut from 36 to 20 per week, "in retaliation for exercise of his First Amendment rights."

On Oct. 8, 2009, Looney filed a grievance with the town stating that his "freedom of speech rights" had been violated, the document states.

According to the intent to sue, Looney had "provided information" to a resident about the "potentially unlawful exercise" of the health department over outdoor wood-burning furnaces, which are regulated by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

In the intent to sue, Looney alleged Town Planner Peter Hughes told him not to "discuss matters outside of his job duties" that concern state or local agencies. Looney also cited a letter from Hughes in his intent to sue that repeats that same request.

Looney later wrote to Black "protesting the limitations placed on him" by Hughes, adding "he had no right to place these restrictions on me..." according to the suit.

In December 2009, Looney's attorney, Jacques Parenteau, asked Black to drop the restrictions, but the intent to sue said counsel for Marlborough refused and "threatened" Looney with "discipline, up to and including discharge."

However, Looney's grievance never reached the arbitration level.

On Jan. 4, 2010, the town's counsel, Andrew Houlding, notified the town hall employees union that Looney's position was "part of a cost savings reduction plan" and that his fulltime status would drop to 20 hours per week. The reason for the reduction was because of "a sharp reduction in building activity" in town and because the number of building permits had

dropped by 50 percent, the intent to sue said.

Because Looney's hours were reduced to fewer than 25 per week, he became illegible for medical benefits and could no longer be part of the collective bargaining agreement with Local 1303-443 Council 4 AFSCME, AFLCIO.

According to the intent to sue, Looney's position was in retaliation for the grievance he filed and for his "exercise of his First Amendment rights."

After the lawsuit commenced on June 14, 2010, Black posted a notice seeking to fill the Building Official position. LaBella and Clark were included in the search committee that interviewed candidates for the position, according to a report issued last month by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Looney applied to be reappointed in 2010, but according to the report, LaBella and Clark said during the interview that they had concerns hiring someone who was suing the town. Looney ultimately was not reappointed.

According to the report, on Sept. 30, 2010, the selectmen moved to dismiss Looney's complaint "on the grounds that...all three individual defendants were entitled to qualified immunity."

The selectmen's attorney, Michael J. Rose, said that qualified immunity is designed to "protect public office holders and officials from the burdens of litigation."

However, the District Court rejected the selectmen's argument and determined that the three were not entitled to qualified immunity. The court added that Black's conduct in reducing Looney's hours was not "objectively reasonable."

Black, LaBella and Clark appealed the District Court's decision, and the case was moved to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, where it was argued before a panel of three judges on Sept. 27, 2012. On Dec. 21, the court rendered its decision that the three were entitled to qualified immunity because Looney's claims of violations of free speech and due process were "groundless."

According to Rose, Looney "did not have a contract that required any specific amount of hours so the town had the right to reduce his hours."

Furthermore, in connection with the grievance Looney filed, Rose said the Second Circuit determined that Looney "wasn't speaking as a citizen on a matter of public concern but rather he was speaking as a government employee while he was at work."

Although the two claims against Black and the other selectmen are dismissed, there are still two pending claims against the town of Marlborough: a breach of contract and a violation of Connecticut's general statute 31-51 that applies to speech in the workplace.

However, according to a press release by Rose, based on the Second Circuit Court's ruling the two claims against the town "would be dismissed at a later hearing."

Looney's attorney, Parenteau, was reached but declined to comment.

Former selectman LaBella said he was "very pleased" by the outcome of the Second Circuit. He added that he, Black and Clark "consider it the appropriate decision by the court."

Bethlehem Goes Young with New Music Director in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

Many of us feel pretty satisfied with ourselves when we learn to play a musical instrument. Maybe it was "Smoke on the Water" on guitar or "Chopsticks" on the piano, but you can recall the first time you were able to say, "Yeah, I play an instrument."

For Matthew Chiu, learning how to play a musical instrument is less of an accomplishment and more a hobby. At his count, he can play about a half-dozen instruments and has plans to learn some more. He wants to improve his vocals, as well.

Given his musical talents, the fact that Chiu occupies the position of music director at Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church in East Hampton is not all that surprising. What is surprising, however, is that Chiu is just 19 years old, a recent graduate of East Hampton High School and a freshman at the University of Connecticut.

"It's a little strange, telling people older than you what to do," he admitted, laughing. "But it's been great. The whole church community has been so welcoming."

Even at his young age, this isn't Chiu's first time directing music at a church. Having learned how to play piano at just five years old, Chiu, an East Hampton native, had the opportunity to begin playing the organ at age 12. While attending St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Glastonbury when he was younger, Chiu said the music director at the church passed away and he and his older brother, who also can play piano, were asked if they could play a few hymns during the service.

According to Chiu, playing the organ is nothing like playing the piano; a good comparison perhaps would be like jumping from a bicycle to a motorcycle.

"Oh my gosh, it's a lot different" than the piano, Chiu said. "It's like playing a whole new instrument. I was pretty awful."

But with the help of an organ teacher, An-

gela Salcedo, Chiu improved to the point he began subbing around to churches in the area that needed an organ player. "Organ players are kind of hard to come by," he related.

Through subbing in, Chiu ended up at Bethlehem Lutheran last summer. After spending the entire summer there playing the organ, Chiu inquired if the church would be interested in keeping him on full-time. The two sides reached an agreement and, on Sept. 1, Chiu became the church's newest music director.

Since joining the church, Chiu has quickly become a part of many of its programs. Chiu said he has taken part in the church's special worship services and funerals, has participated in the Santa Lucia pageant – a traditional Swedish celebration – and has plans to begin working with the children of the church to set up a children's choir.

And telling older people what to do hasn't been nearly as awkward as he thought it would. "I've learned that they respect me for my musical ability, so it's been good so far," Chiu said.

Chiu continues to attend UConn, studying in the school's five-year musical education program under the direction of Salcedo, a professor at the school. Along with learning the piano, Chiu learned the trumpet in middle school, the guitar in high school, the trombone last year, and said he has sights set on percussion and vocals in the next year. Already a member of the chamber choir, he also plans to join the concert band next year, as well.

With music almost certainly in his future, Chiu said he's not sure quite yet what he wants to do after college; he said he hopes to teach music at a high school while still working as a music director at a church, and possibly teaching private lessons on the side.

And while that seems like a lot to juggle, just remember all of the music he can play.

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church is located at 1 E. High St.



The music department at Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church is now under the direction of young Matthew Chiu, a recent East Hampton High School graduate and current freshman at the University of Connecticut.

Residents See Plans on EHHS Renovation Project

by Joshua Anusewicz

Residents were brought up to speed on the progress of the high school renovation project at an informational session on Tuesday night at East Hampton High School, where representatives from the architectural firm working on the project presented conceptual designs for the renovation.

The project recently passed into “Phase One” of the process to renovate the high school “as new,” a strategy that includes a nearly complete overhaul of the building while maintaining the structural integrity of it. In November, residents unanimously approved a funding request of \$200,080 to move forward with “pre-referendum project costs” that include architectural, engineering, project management, construction management, and legal fees, among other expenditures.

The overall project is expected to be an extensive upgrade of the high school facility, particularly in the areas of science and technology. The need for a renovation was highlighted in a 2007 report from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), which is tasked with putting schools through an accreditation process over 10 years.

Now, with the district halfway through the accreditation process, the district has had to show NEASC that it is taking considerable steps toward reaching its accreditation in 2017. To meet the requirements, the Board of Education formed the High School Building Committee early in 2012 to oversee the operations of the proposed project, which must be designed and planned before heading to a town-wide referendum for approval. The proposal, along with

an approval from the town’s voters, must be submitted to the state by June 30, to possibly receive state reimbursement.

At Tuesday’s meeting, John Mena, a representative from the Capital Region Education Council (CREC), the group tabbed as the project manager for the renovation, was on hand to give updates and answer questions. Mena, a member of CREC’s construction division, called projects like this their “bread and butter” and added that CREC had worked with the architects SLAM Collaborative of Glastonbury, and the construction company, Downes Construction of New Britain, on multiple occasions.

Mena also related some good news, informing the committee that the state reimbursement rate for school renovation projects has been increased from 52 percent to 58.2 percent for this year.

“It’s certainly more than we expected,” Mena said.

While Mena said that all of the entities working on the project are focused on the “general scope” and not the design and education specifications of the project at this point, SLAM was able to present two conceptual designs for the proposed renovation. Through the needs outlined in the NEASC report and meetings with faculty and staff at the school, Glenn Gollenberg of SLAM stated that both concepts would include full-sized computer labs, as well as one classroom for each teacher in the school.

In the first concept, Gollenberg stated that the science labs and classrooms, highlighted in the NEASC report as an area in need of improvement, would be moved exclusively to the

“wings” located at the far end of the academic area of the school. The space that is currently occupied by the gymnasium would be turned into the library, while the gymnasium would be shifted to the current fitness area located in the back of the school. A new hallway would also be built behind the auditorium that would provide another connection from the current location of the gym to the current location of the library.

The first concept would also include space for the Board of Education and the school district’s central offices, as the committee has discussed moving the offices from their current location on Main Street.

The second concept would include the same gym and library configuration as the first concept, but would move all performing and visual arts to a wing in the back of the building near the current location of the library. Both of the wings on the school would be demolished and a new science wing would be built in the front right portion of the building, located near the entrance.

With the demolition of the wings, additional student parking would be built, as well as a parent drop-off. The additional parking would also allow for an access road to be built around the entire building that would make it easier for vehicles to exit when busses were in the front of the school.

A third concept was also introduced that was the same as the second concept, but proposed to keep one of the wings of the school for town use. A parking lot would be built in place of the demolished wing for the use of these of-

fices.

After the concepts were introduced, residents took turn asking questions that focused on a myriad of topics, including hazardous materials, handicapped accessibility, security and energy efficiency. While the committee and the groups on hand took the questions into consideration, they admitted that it was impossible, at this point, to say how these matters would be addressed.

“We haven’t designed anything yet,” Mena reminded the audience, adding that the education specifications of the building won’t be drafted until a referendum passes.

One resident, Peter Schiavone, agreed. “We need to be able to sell this to the residents,” he stated. “We should really be focusing on the core matters before we talk about adding things on.”

Cynthia Abraham, a member of the building committee, said it wasn’t necessarily about “selling” the residents but keeping them informed so they can make a sound decision on the project. “We are here to present all of the facts and then let the town decide,” Abraham said.

Residents will have at least one more opportunity to get informed on the project, as an additional information session is scheduled to take place next month. Abraham said that as the process stands now, the committee hopes to schedule a referendum on the project to take place in late March or early April. Residents can also attend meetings of the high school building committee, which take place every Thursday at East Hampton High School at 6:30 p.m.

East Hampton School Board Discusses School Renovation Project

by Joshua Anusewicz

Part of the reason Mark Winzler was chosen as interim superintendent of schools was his experience with high school building projects, which included Rocky Hill High School at his last position.

That experience was evident at Monday’s Board of Education meeting, where he broke down just how much he’s been involved in the high school renovation project since joining the district just a few weeks ago.

“I’ve been through this three times before, so I’m not a neophyte,” Winzler assured the board.

Winzler, a former superintendent in Bolton, said that he had the opportunity to meet with the project manager, architectural firm, and construction manager for the project – Capital Region Education Council (CREC), SLAM Collaborative, and Downes Construction, respectively – last Thursday to get “up to speed” on the proposed project.

Speaking to the school board, Winzler emphasized that the board’s major involvement of the project will come when the referendum is

passed. At that point, it will be up to the board, he said, to provide the state with the school’s education specifications.

“[The education specifications] provide a narrative for the project,” Winzler said, “that show what we’re teaching at our school.”

Michelle Barber, a member of the High School Building Committee, was also on hand to inform the board on the committee’s progress. Barber stated that representatives from SLAM and CREC recently met with faculty and administration of the school to see what those who work in the building felt were the most important needs for the school.

Barber said that one of the main concerns that teachers had was being able to have their own classroom. “That is their identity, and it gives them the opportunity to meet with their students,” Barber said, adding that SLAM was “very impressed” with relationship between the teachers and students at the school.

Another salient point that Barber raised was the building size, which she stated, based on state calculations on enrollment, was too big.

Though the NEASC report, which outlines what is needed for the school to remain accredited, states that the school needs updated science space, Barber said the school actually has more science space than is actually needed, according to the state.

“Our science program is incredibly strong here,” Barber added. “Most students take four years of science.”

Winzler, however, called the square footage calculations “out of date,” as the numbers don’t take into account new programs that schools offer, particularly special education and technology.

* * *

Winzler also updated the board on a “safety symposium” that he recently attended, along with hundreds of other schools across the country. Fortunately, he brought back good news: most of the topics covered, he said, are already being implemented in East Hampton.

But one idea that was addressed that Winzler said he plans to implement is an “audit” for every school in the district. This past week,

Colchester Police News

1/8: Hector L. Garay, 26, of 391 Hillside Ave., Hartford, was charged with DUI and speeding on highway, State Police said.

1/9: Hollie Robichaud, 29, of 15 Hillside Ln., was charged with second-degree larceny, State Police said.

1/10: Kristopher Kahle, 29, of 37 Davidson Rd., was charged with fifth-degree larceny, State Police said.

1/10: Nicholas A. Inkel, 22, of 32 Hammond Ct., was charged with fifth-degree larceny, State Police said.

1/11: Eric Cross, 18, of 38 Harvard Rd.,

Manchester, was charged with possession of a controlled substance, State Police said.

1/14: Joshua D. Fuller, 33, of 726 Trumbull Highway, Lebanon, was charged with violation of a protective order, State Police said.

1/14: Kari Marsland, 21, of 506 Fieldstone Crossing, Berlin, was charged with third-degree larceny, State Police said.

1/14: Corey J. Leblond, 39, of 265 Daleville Rd., Willington, was charged with second-degree burglary, second-degree threatening and criminal mischief, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

1/6: James J. Farr, 48, of 75 Cemetery Rd., Colchester, was charged with evading and unsafe backing, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

1/8: Richard M. Zacher, 43, of 1782 Papermill Rd., Marlborough, was charged with DUI and reckless driving, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

1/2: Angel L. Varricchio, 34, of 3 Edgerton St., was arrested for DUI, unsafe backing and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

1/7: William J. Choma, 58, of 20 Namonee Trail, was arrested for failing to respond to an infraction, police said.

1/9: Debra Grace Brooke, 38, of 4B Bellevue St., was arrested for two counts of second-degree failure to appear, stemming from two separate incidents, police said.

1/9: Patrick Salvatore Aiello, 24, of 3 Sears Pl., was arrested for failure to respond, police said.

1/10: Jasmine Nicole Menard, 23, of 48 Middletown Ave., was arrested for third-degree assault and disorderly conduct stemming from a May 8, 2012, incident, police said.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Margaret Elizabeth Jock

Margaret Elizabeth (Loosemore) Jock, 81, of East Hampton passed away at Middlesex Hospital Tuesday, Jan. 8. Born March 20, 1931, in Burlington, Vt., she was predeceased by her husband, Floyd C. Jock.

She is survived by her son William F. Jock and his wife Charlene of East Hampton. She also leaves behind her cherished granddaughters Tammie, Tina and April. Her heart and soul belonged to her three loving great-grandsons, James, Liam and William, that she loved dearly. Margaret comes from a large family with seven siblings, Irene, Richard, Kenneth, William, Robert, Theresa and Donald. She also leaves behind several nieces and nephews.

The family would like to sincerely thank the nurses and staff at Middlesex Hospital for their tender care of Margaret and extend their eternal gratification to those who made Margaret's final days peaceful and comfortable.

A spring graveside service will take place at Swedish Cemetery in Portland at a time to be determined.

Marlborough

Juan Antonio Sanchez

Juan Antonio Sanchez, 97, formerly of Marlborough, passed away Thursday, Jan. 10, at the Manchester Manor Nursing Home and assisted care facility. The son of Juan Jose Sanchez and Paulina Diaz, he was born in El Ebanos, Texas, on Sept. 16, 1915.

He was the third of 11 children. He now joins his wife Marjorie Louise to whom he was devoted to for 60 years. Juan moved back to Reynosa, Mexico, with his family when he was 8, and lived there until World War II. Although he spoke only Spanish, he enlisted into the U.S. Army.

It was in the Army that he met his wife, while stationed in Manchester as part of the 79th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Command. After their wedding, he was deployed to Europe where as a member of the 1159th Engineer Combat group he participated in the Rhineland Campaign and several campaigns throughout central Europe. His citations include an EAME Theater Ribbon, Good Conduct Ribbon and American Defense Ribbon. While in the service he also perfected his English in both the written and spoken word.

After the war he returned to Connecticut, where he learned tool and die making, blue print reading, and became a master machinist. The family lived in Plainville for 16 years before moving to Marlborough in 1969. In Marlborough, Juan was an active member of the American Legion and was proud to receive a pin for 35 years of continuous service. Juan always enjoyed singing and humming songs from the 1950s and '60s. He had a great sense of humor and loved to entertain others. He was a master at telling funny stories and jokes and performing slight of hand magic tricks. Always inquisitive and eager to learn, he enjoyed doing crossword puzzles and playing word games.

His is predeceased by a son, Philip Sanchez and by his brother Rufino, and five of his sisters, Elisa, Isabel, Hortensia, Benilda and Susie. He is survived by his three sons, Juan Jr. and his wife Diane of Caplin, Robert and his wife Robin of Mendon, Mass., Marc and his wife Beth of Manchester, and a daughter Luetta of Epping, N.H.; additionally, by seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren and many nieces. He also has four living sisters, Irma of McAllen, Texas, and Virginia, Amalia and Nora, all in Mexico.

The family wishes to thank the staff of the Manchester Manor for the care they gave both Marjorie and Juan over the years.

A celebration of Juan's life was held at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Tuesday, Jan. 15. Burial was at Marlboro Cemetery, followed by a reception at Angelico's Lake House Restaurant in East Hampton.

Marlborough

Roger H. Austin

Roger H. Austin, 84, of Marlborough, beloved husband of Marilyn (Badger) Austin died Friday, Jan. 11, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Jan. 21, 1928, in Hartford, Vt., he was the son of the late Clyde and Mary (Paye) Austin.

Roger was a resident of Marlborough since 1965. He proudly served his country in the Air Force during both World War II and the Korean War. He was employed as a machinist at Purdy Corp. in Manchester until his retirement. Roger also delivered newspapers for the *Hartford Courant* for many years. He was a member of the American Legion in Marlborough and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Besides his wife he is survived by his son, Michael Austin of Colchester and his fiancée Carry Cote; his daughter, Cheryl Austin of Cobalt and her boyfriend Angelo Simoni; a brother, Donald Austin and his wife Sally of Vermont; a sister, Jean Longley of Vermont; a sister-in-law, Emily Austin; three grandchildren; and his cat Tony.

He was predeceased by his son, Reginald Austin-Tiedeman, and a brother, Leo Austin.

The family received relatives and friends at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Wednesday, Jan. 16. Burial will be in the spring in the family plot in Vermont.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Lois P. Anderson

Lois P. Anderson, 77, of Portland, wife of the late Norman E. Anderson passed away Saturday, Jan. 12, at Cobalt Lodge Health Care. She was the daughter of the late Irving and Phyllis (Dickson) May.

Born Sept. 3, 1935, in Hartford, she was a lifelong resident of Portland. She worked for the Portland Visiting Nurse Association for many years until her retirement.

She leaves a son and daughter-in-law, Robert E. and Nancy Slater of Portland; a stepdaughter, Donna Downing of Portland; stepsister, Jane Olson of Louisiana; a sister-in-law, Winifred May of Florida; six grandchildren, Robert R. Slater, Justin Slater, Shane and Justin Lamontagne, and Walter and Ryan Margelot; seven great-grandchildren; and a niece and a nephew.

She was predeceased by a daughter, Cathy Margelot, and by a brother, Bruce May.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Jan. 17, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial was in Center Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Thursday morning before the service at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111 or to WIHS Radio, 1933 South Main St., Middletown, CT. 06457.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

East Hampton

Agnes K. King

Agnes K. King, 86, of Middletown, formerly of East Hampton, daughter of the late Anna and Charles Knotek and wife of the late Robert King, passed away peacefully Saturday, Jan. 12, at Middlesex Hospital Hospice.

Agnes worked many years at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford before retiring. She was an avid reader and loved mystery novels, gardening, bird-watching, flea markets, collecting old books and owls.

She is survived by her brother, Charles Knotek of Stafford Springs; her son, Howard Chaffee Jr. and his soulmate Barbara of Middletown; her daughter, Sandra (King) Young of East Hampton; four grandchildren, Brenda, Nicole, Abby and Justin; three great-grandsons, Timothy, Noah and Spencer; and three nieces.

A private funeral service will be held in the Spencer Funeral Home and burial will be in Lakeview Cemetery.

The family wishes to thank the staff of Wadsworth Glen for their friendship, kindness and care they have given to Agnes.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Robert J. Kodym

Mr. Robert J. Kodym, 65, of Colchester, passed from this life Monday, Jan. 7. Born Nov. 25, 1947, in Norwich, he was the son of the late John and Rose (Soutchek) Kodym.

Robert was a graduate of Bacon Academy who attended university in Nebraska before joining the United States Army. He then returned to Colchester and received a degree in hairdressing and cosmetology. He was an accomplished and successful business owner for many years.

Robert was a talented artist and avid writer. Traveling throughout Europe and South America in the 1980s, he began pursuing his dream of writing. Robert wrote two novels and was published in numerous anthologies and recorded soundtracks. Additionally, he was a constant source for unique, satirical articles published in several newspapers throughout Connecticut.

Robert is survived by his brother, Richard Kodym and his wife Patricia, of Salem; one nephew, Jason Kodym; two nieces and nephews-in-law, Sabrina and David Bruce of Norwich and Erika and Brian Blanchard of Saint Cloud, Fla.; great nieces and nephews, Heather Culpepper and Jonathon Bruce of Norwich and Ava Blanchard of Saint Cloud, Fla.; his special friends, Charlie and Phyllis Babek and Linda Niedojadlo; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that donations be made out to the ASPCA.

A private burial will be followed by an open reception. Friends and family are invited to celebrate Robert's life at the St. Joseph's Polish Club on Saturday, Jan. 19, from 2-5 p.m.

Amston

Peter G. Poulin Jr.

Peter G. Poulin Jr., 66, of Amston, widower of the late Linda (Muzzy) Poulin, passed away Friday, Jan. 11, at Hartford Hospital. Born Oct. 25, 1946, in Calais, Maine, he was the son of the late Peter and Evie (Smith) Poulin.

Peter worked as a rigger for Electric Boat and then Foxwoods for many years before his retirement. He was a member of the Charity and Relief Lodge A.F. & A.M. in Mystic, as well as the American Cribbage Congress. Peter was an avid Red Sox fan and loved his dog, but was especially dedicated to his family. He will be remembered most for his hard work and support to his family and friends. His reputation of putting other's needs above his own will never be forgotten.

He is survived by his son, Brian Poulin of Amston; three grandchildren, Katherine, Matthew and Sarah Poulin of Glastonbury; his dear friend, John Murray of East Hampton; his closest friend (and cousin) William Smith of New Britain; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his wife of 40 years and his parents, he was predeceased by his daughter, Kimberly Lynn Poulin and his sister, Jeanne Johnson.

Friends called Wednesday, Jan. 16, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A memorial service followed. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Hebron Vol. Fire Dept., 44 Main St., Hebron, CT 06248.

East Hampton

Carrie Leola Linder

Carrie Leola (Smith) Linder, 86, of Cromwell and formerly of East Hampton, passed away Monday, Jan. 14 at home peacefully surrounded by loved ones. Born in Soperton, Ga., she was the daughter of the late Obia and Gertrude (Little) Smith.

Carrie came to Connecticut in the late '40s and worked in tobacco and at Wesleyan University before retiring from Pratt and Whitney Aircraft after 30 years.

She is survived by two grandchildren, Kim Kincy and Kerry Kincy; four great grandchildren, Daniel Livesey, Zoe Kincy, Frankie Blu Kincy and Georgia Katie Robertson; her daughter-in-law, Joan Kincy and a host of relatives and friends in New Britain and Soperton, Ga.

Along with her parents, Carrie was predeceased by her son, Charles L. Kincy.

Carrie's family would like to say a special thank you to James Waldner, Cynthia Waldner, Doreen Buchanan, Ruby Simpson and Howard Needle for the wonderful care and kindness they gave to Carrie.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Jan. 19, at 9 a.m., at Zion First Baptist Church, 16 James A. Moses Ave., Middletown, with the Rev. Usher Toler officiating. Burial will be at the convenience of the family in Soperton, Ga.

Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church Street, Middletown is handling the arrangements. Messages of condolence may be sent to the family at doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Colchester

Elise Ozimek

Elise (Lisa Johanna Maria Hugens) Ozimek, 87, of Colchester, beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother passed away peacefully Saturday, Jan. 5. She was predeceased by her loving husband Frank A. Ozimek in 2011. Elise was born March 12, 1925, in Brunssum, Netherlands, a daughter of the late Josephus and Maria Cornelia (Janssens) Hugens.

She and Frank were married on March 3, 1945, in Brunssum, Netherlands and made their home and raised their family in Colchester. Elise and Frank celebrated 66 years together prior to his passing. Elise was a communicant at St. Andrew Church and a life member of the VFW Ladies Auxiliary. Elise was an extraordinary seamstress and homemaker but her true passion and devotion was for her family here and in the Netherlands. She will be deeply missed by her family and friends.

Elise leaves a son and three daughters; Frank and Theresa Ozimek of Eau Claire, WI, Ceciel and Barry Setterstrom of Andover, Lisa Ozimek of Summit, NJ, Annemarie and Kevin Williams of Colchester; three grandsons, Jack and Kathleen Ozimek, Andrew Ozimek and Jessica Klemm and Greg Krach and Vicky Szamocki; two great-grandsons, Lochlain Ozimek and Logan Ozimek; two step granddaughters; Amy and Brian Downey and their children, and Ky and Michael Vitti and their children; she also leaves special nieces, nephews, family and friends in the Netherlands and her special niece Marlie and Gary Gill and family in Sequim, WA. She was predeceased by her sister, Ceciel Engels and husband Drees; and three brothers and their wives, Frans and Gerda Hugens, Arthur and Tinnie van Oevelen, and Rene and Jantina (Yanti) van Oevelen.

Funeral services and interment will be private. Elise's family is requesting that contributions in her memory be made to: Gerard Desrochers, C.Ss.R., Secretariat of the Shrine, Sainte Anne de Beupre (Quebec) Canada GOA 3CO.

Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., is in charge of the funeral arrangements.

Colchester

Sylvia Elaine Gray

Sylvia Elaine (Alley) Gray, 85, died Monday, Jan. 14, at Harrington Court Health Care Center in Colchester. She was born in 1927 in Winterport, Maine, the daughter of Maurice and Hazel (Lowe) Alley. She graduated from the Eastern Maine General Hospital (now EMMC) School of Nursing in 1947 and was a registered nurse.

She married Howard M. Gray of East Blue Hill, Maine, on Oct. 2, 1947; he predeceased her.

The family would like to thank the staff and management at Harrington Court for the wonderful care Sylvia received while living there.

Private graveside services will be held in the Spring at Oak Hill Cemetery in Winterport.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

East Hampton

Dominick A. Scarfo

Dominick "Dick" A. Scarfo, husband of the late Patricia (Spencer) Scarfo, died Friday, Jan. 11, at Marlborough Healthcare Center. Born July 28, 1920, in Mammola, Italy, he was a son of the late Gaetano and Nancy Scarfo.

Dick proudly served his country in the U.S. Army during World War II. After working two full-time jobs, at General Electric and Stanley Works, he retired and enjoyed his grandchildren and visiting family and friends.

The family wishes to thank Marlborough Health Care Center and Masonic Care Hospice for making Dick's final days peaceful.

He is survived by a daughter, Paula Cassidy, of Middletown; a son, Alan Scarfo and his wife, Melissa, of East Hampton; two grandchildren, Conner Cassidy and Isabella Scarfo; two brothers, Carmine Scarfo, of Meriden, and Nicholas and his wife, Jeanne Scarfo, of Southington; a sister, Mary Pisarz, of Meriden; and a sister-in-law, Bette Scarfo, of Meriden. He was predeceased by a son, Gary Scarfo; a brother-in-law, Peter Pisarz; two brothers, John and Luigi Scarfo; and a sister, Rasaella Scarfo.

Family gathered Tuesday, Jan. 15, at the Beecher & Bennett-Flatow Funeral Home, 48 Cook Ave., Meriden. Burial followed at Sacred Heart Cemetery. Relatives and friends called at the funeral home Monday, Jan. 14.

Hebron

Sylvia Sawyer Craig

Sylvia Sawyer Craig, passed away suddenly Tuesday, Jan. 8. She was born in 1940 in Hartford to Helen Burdzel Sawyer and Oscar W. Sawyer.

She lived in East Hartford for 20 years before moving to Hebron. She married her grammar school sweetheart Robert Craig, her husband of over 52 years. She raised two sons, Robert Jr. and Richard Earl, where they resided in Hebron for over 20 years. Syl was president of the P.T.A./P.T.O, instrumental in opening the thrift store in Hebron and was Hebron school bus transportation coordinator.

Syl moved to Florida in the '80s and worked for the Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce as the executive administrative assistant to the president. In her retirement she loved to travel, traveling throughout Canada, Alaska, U.K., Europe, The Islands of the Bahamas, Mexico and the Caribbean. Sylvia parachuted with C.P.I. club in the '60s. Syl also enjoyed boating and scuba diving. She was predeceased by her son Richard.

She is survived by her spouse Robert; son Robert Jr. and his companion Jean, daughter-in-law Stephanie; grandsons Clayton and Tyler Craig; a sister Joan Demont and several nieces and nephews.

A funeral service was held Friday, Jan. 11, at Palm Beach National Chapel, 10055 Heritage Farms Rd., Lake Worth, Fla. The family received friends the morning of the funeral. Interment and committal service will follow in South Florida National Cemetery, Lake Worth.

In lieu of flowers, it is requested that donations be made to Bush or McCathy's Wildlife Sanctuary.

Condolence may be offered at palmbeachnationalchapel.com.

Portland

Harry Dennis McBrien

Harry Dennis McBrien died Thursday, Dec. 20, in New Britain. He was born in Middletown on Nov. 21, 1955 to Robert E. and Rita Irmscher McBrien.

He grew up in Durham, graduated from Xavier High School and received an art degree from Middlesex Community College. He resided in Clinton and Portland for many years and had recently moved to Middletown.

Harry was a kind and gentle man who gave generously to many charitable organizations. He was a strong, independent man who bravely faced many challenges.

He leaves a brother, Philip McBrien of Salem, Ore.; a sister, Marilyn Rice of Plainville; four nephews, Patrick and Brendan McBrien and Mark and Shawn Rice; and many Irmscher and McBrien relatives.

The family would like to thank Harry's very special friend Dawn Frackiewicz-Nay of Kuhn Employment Opportunities in addition to Gilead Community Services of Middletown for the kindness and support they provided. The family is also grateful for the staff at Walnut Hill Care Center who provided warm, compassionate care to Harry in his final days.

A memorial service will be held today, Jan. 18, at 9 a.m., at the Kuhn offices at 100 Plaza Middlesex in Middletown. There will be a private burial in Beaver Brook Cemetery in Clinton at a later date.

Donations in Harry's memory may be made online to Kuhn Employment Opportunities at www.kuhngroup.org or mailed to Gilead Community Services, PO Box 1000, Middletown, CT 06457.

Condolences may be sent online to bailey-funeralhome.com.

Colchester

Robert Richard White

Robert Richard White passed away Monday, Jan. 7. Bob was born Aug. 8, 1943, to James and Hildegard (Johnson) White. He leaves his brother John. Besides his parents, he was predeceased by a sister Kathleen Rebillard.

A lifelong Colchester resident, Bob attended local schools and graduated from Bacon Academy in 1961. After graduating from UConn, he was employed by and retired from the federal government. Bob will be missed by his friends and supporters at NAMI and his Bacon classmates.

Funeral arrangements will be private. Memorial contributions can be made to: NAMI Southeast CT, 117 Pinebrook Rd., Colchester CT 06415 or Bacon Academy 210th Anniversary, P.O. Box 67, Colchester, CT 06415

East Hampton

Brooks Barton Heise Sr.

Brooks Barton Heise Sr., formerly of East Hampton, husband of Dorothy Burdick Heise, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Jan. 8. He was born Oct. 20, 1922, son of the late Frank and Gladys (Lincoln) Heise.

He graduated from Hall High School in West Hartford in the Class of 1940, and was a graduate of Yale University with a degree in mechanical engineering in the class of 1946. Brooks served in the US Navy during World War II.

He was employed for many years by the PLAX Corporation in Stonington. He founded Heise Industries, Inc., located in East Berlin, in 1965 for the design and manufacture of molds for the production of plastic containers. He was a member of the Elks Lodge 1784 in Westbrook. He was an avid sailor owning many different types of boats over the years. His woodworking skills were impressive, making many of the furniture pieces in his home.

Besides his wife, he is survived by a daughter, Susan of Hebron, and a son, Brooks Jr. and daughter-in-law Lynn of Higganum; five grandchildren; and eight step-children.

A memorial service was held Monday, Jan. 14, at noon, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, send donations to The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (michaeljfox.org) or Disabled American Veterans (dav.org).

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.