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Members of the Colchester Community Theatre took Bacon Academy's stage earlier this week to prepare for their upcoming production of *Cinderella*. Pictured above, the performers rehearse one of the opening scenes of the show with the song "The Prince is Having a Ball."

'Cinderella' Musical Coming to Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

The giant illuminated slipper that has added sparkle to the Town Green in recent weeks is only a preview of the enchantment that will come to Colchester next weekend in the Colchester Community Theater's upcoming musical, *Cinderella*.

At a rehearsal Monday night, children acting as mice, women in adorned ball gowns and dozens of kids embodying villagers took the Bacon Academy stage to rehearse lines, belt out songs, and in a lavish ballroom scene, even waltz across the stage.

Among all of the embellished costumes and characters, this year's show also includes something that past shows haven't: a little bit of magic.

The production is based on the classic Rodgers and Hammerstein musical – and specifically the 1997 TV version of the play, which starred Brandy as Cinderella and the late Whitney Houston as her fairy godmother.

For the CCT's production a cast of 70 performers will retell the fairytale of a girl living

under the evil wrath of her stepmother until unexpected help and some magic helps her find love.

The musical also includes popular songs "Impossible" and "Ten Minutes Ago."

CCT's president Diane Ozmun said she expects the show to sell out this year, like in years past, because the timeless tale is one that fascinates people of all ages.

"Whether you are 4 years old or 94 years old, you know who Cinderella is," Ozmun said.

This year's decision to perform *Cinderella* was made by the CCT Board of Directors, who agreed they wanted to do a show that appeals to families and incorporates more children.

Last year, CCT performed *Anything Goes* and in 2011, *Titanic* – two productions that Ozmun said were geared towards an older crowd.

Set designer Diana Matsuzaki said the previous shows that both took place aboard a ship made it easier for CCT to reuse props. How-

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Belltown Residents Protest Reimondo Retention

by Joshua Anusewicz

Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.

East Hampton Police Chief Matthew Reimondo was set to retire at the end of January, after 28 years on the job, after accepting the town's retirement offer earlier that month. However, the town announced last week that Reimondo would be retained as the interim police chief while the town continued its search for a permanent candidate to lead the department.

As has become commonplace with many of the decisions in the department, however, the reappointment of Reimondo has not sat well with some residents – and some elected officials.

Last Friday, after the decision was announced, Town Council member Ted Hintz Jr. organized a press conference in front of Town Hall to protest what he believes was an "illegal action" by Town Manager Michael Maniscalco.

"This was done without the benefit of discussion of the entire Town Council," said Hintz, flanked by Sgt. Michael Green and Police Union President Michael Salafia. Hintz said that the separation agreement between Reimondo and the town stated that Reimondo was not allowed to seek reemployment with the town, and that Maniscalco's decision was in breach of the agreement.

"With all of the controversy of the past, there would be no chance of history repeating itself," Hintz said of the alleged violation of the clause in the contract. "Or so we thought."

Salafia also had pointed words for

Maniscalco. "The police union has no faith in the town manager," he said, calling the decision "disappointing" and "horrible."

Residents in attendance also let their voices be heard, throwing their support behind the officers by railing against Reimondo, whom they say has brought morale down with the department.

"I feel sorry for the guys," said resident Pete Brown.

"Why can't we get rid of this chief, who has brought morale down?" added resident Rita Gibbons.

Controversy has swirled around the department – Reimondo, in particular – since the summer of 2010, when Reimondo was unceremoniously fired by then-Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe for cost-saving measures. Opponents of the decision, who felt Reimondo was being targeted by O'Keefe and former members of the Town Council, forced a referendum to reinstate the police chief, which passed resoundingly.

But the issues didn't stop there. First, Reimondo was found to have forwarded racially-insensitive emails, an action that earned him sensitivity training and a letter of reprimand from the town. He then faced strong opposition from the police union, which, among other actions, levied a "vote of no confidence" against Reimondo that was signed by the majority of the police department.

Reimondo remained on board, however, until last month, when Maniscalco and the Town Council agreed to offer Reimondo, Green, and

Sgt. Garritt Kelly – the department's three senior officers – retirement packages. Reimondo and Kelly accepted the offers, but Green remained on.

If the tone of Friday's press conference was any indication, many believed – including officers within the department – that Green should be tabbed as police chief in the interim. (Green had served as lieutenant while Reimondo was removed from his position in 2010, a position created to lead the department at the time.)

But though Hintz mentioned Friday that the department had several "highly-skilled sergeants" already on the force, Maniscalco said on Wednesday, in defending his action, that the ability of the sergeants to serve as interim chief was one of the reasons he chose to keep Reimondo.

"There were three options: an exterior option, an interior option or retain Matt [Reimondo]," Maniscalco said. Outlining his process, Maniscalco said that an exterior candidate would be subject to multiple state statutes, including background checks and psychological reviews, which he said would not be met in such a "tight timeline."

"That was no longer an option," Maniscalco said. He added that retaining Reimondo at a cost of \$2,000 per week would actually save the town money, as an interim would cost significantly more, and that the three-month contract could be modified at any time over the next 90 days if a new police chief was hired. (Maniscalco also stressed that Reimondo would not receive any of his retirement payments



Matt Reimondo is staying on in East Hampton, as the town's interim police chief. Reimondo is shown here being interviewed by the media, in a file photo.

while serving as interim chief, as it would be against the law.)

Maniscalco said he then looked into promot-

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♥ Valentine's Day Section Inside ♥



Four cast members acting as villagers during one of the opening *Cinderella* scenes, “The Prince is Having a Ball” curiously glare into a bucket, just one of the many props used in the show.

Cinderella cont. from Front Page

ever, she said this year’s set was “a bit of a challenge.”

Ditching the previous white color scheme and sea motif, Matsuzaki said this year’s show gave her the opportunity to come up with some creative ideas.

“This year we avoided using right angles or straight lines,” she said. “Everything is curvy and whimsical and flowing.”

Using fabric was also a new approach to background sets this year, which Matsuzaki said add a great deal of color.

In order to produce the magical elements of the plot, the show’s director Wallis Johnson said new props needed to be constructed.

Props that capture the magic include a growing tree, a clock that actually strikes midnight, a pumpkin that turns into a coach and mice that turn into coachmen, all in a matter of seconds on stage.

A defining moment that will also captivate the audience is the transformation of Cinderella’s old and shabby dress into a beautiful gown fit for a ball.

While Johnson said the 125 cast and crew members include many familiar faces, this year CCT has welcomed new members, including the young woman playing the lead role of Cinderella.

Siobhan Fitzgerald, who will play Cinderella, said she first learned of the role on the CCT website. In theater since she was a little girl, Fitzgerald said she has performed in many productions around Connecticut but never in Colchester. Currently a Hartford resident, Fitzgerald said the town of Colchester is “a little treasure.” One of the greatest parts of being in *Cinderella*, Fitzgerald said, is leaving rehearsal humming the songs.

Fitzgerald added that her responsibility as the lead role is a big one, and she hopes to entertain the community.

“I’m really excited to see how the audience reacts to it and I hope they really enjoy the show,” she said. “That’s really what we are here for.”

CCT veteran Angela Dias plays the evil role of Cinderella’s stepmother, a part she said she has had fun with. “A lot of times you can do a lot with the mean roles...I’m so sweet in real life so it’s fun to get out those feelings in an acceptable way,” she joked.

Cinderella’s prince is played by 24-year-old Joseph Leone, whose last CCT show was *Fiddler on the Roof* in 2006. Although he has experience playing a variety of roles throughout high school and college, Leone said his role as Prince Christopher is a tough one.

“[There is] certainly a lot more talking and singing and memorization and dancing,” he said. “It’s definitely a lot more involved but for as involved as it is it’s infinitely more fun.”

The toughest part of playing Prince Christopher, Leone said, is maintaining good posture. “I’m constantly being reminded to stand up straight.”

However, Leone added that he also sees a little bit of Prince Christopher in himself, in that, he, too, is a hopeless romantic.

The musical’s most enchanting character, the one that makes Cinderella’s wishes come true, is the fairy godmother, played by Colleen Kaplan. Kaplan has worked with CCT for five years and was pleased with the choice of *Cinderella* as this year’s musical. “It was time to have an upbeat show,” she said.

While cast and crew members guarantee *Cinderella* will entertain, several said the story line is relatable. “I think it’s always relatable to have a dream,” said Fitzgerald. “You kind of have to believe in yourself and make your own dreams come true.”

CCT invites all residents – near and far – to take part in the magic next weekend.

Performance dates are Friday, Feb. 15 at 7 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 16, at 2 and 7 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 17, at 2 p.m., all at the Bacon Academy auditorium, 611 Norwich Ave. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors and children age 12 and under. Preferred seating tickets will be offered for \$20 each and ticket-holders will be asked to arrive at least a half hour before performance time. Seating before the general audience will take place 20-30 minutes before the performance time.

For the first time, tickets are also being offered online through Colchester Parks and Recreation. Visit colchestercommunitytheatre.com and choose “buy tickets” on the welcome page. In-person ticket sales are also available at Colchester Parks and Recreation Department in the Town Hall or at Copies Plus...more, located at 31 Halls Hill Rd. CCT will also offer cash and check ticket sales at the entrance to the Bacon auditorium Fridays during February from 7-9 p.m. Tickets will be available at the door on performance days subject to availability. However, audience members are encouraged to purchase tickets ahead of time.

In addition, CCT is also hosting an online fundraiser for the Make-A-Wish Foundation to help grant wishes to children with life-threatening medical conditions. People interested in donating are encouraged to visit friends.wish.org/054-000/page/Colchester-Theatre/Colchester-Community-Theatre-For-Wishes!.htm. Donations will also be accepted at all of the shows.

Director Wallis Johnson said through the Make-A-Wish Foundation CCT hopes to make a child’s wish come true, just like Cinderella’s wishes are granted.

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

Reimondo cont. from Front Page

ing one of the department’s sergeants, interviewing each one to see if they would be able to handle the position. He said that while each sergeant is “good at what they do” as officers, it was “obvious they don’t have the political acumen to fill an incredibly political and contentious position.” He added that the department is already short-staffed, and that putting a sergeant in a position he’s unqualified for could put that individual’s career at risk, which he said “would not be fair to them.”

With no other options, Maniscalco chose to retain Reimondo, a decision he said was done “100 percent above board,” with the help of the town’s labor attorney. Maniscalco called the clause Hintz referred to as “standard boilerplate language” that can be found in similar contracts, and added that an additional section in the agreement states that the new employment contract is not binding “unless signed by the parties after the date of this agreement.” This essentially means, Maniscalco said, that a whole new contract was drafted.

Maniscalco also pointed out that, per the Town Charter, the decision to appoint a police chief is vested solely in the town manager. He added, as Hintz did during his press conference, that the Town Council attempted to hold a special meeting to discuss the town manager’s decision, but the meeting was canceled due to lack of notice that would violate Freedom of Information (FOI) laws.

Maniscalco also attempted to put to rest any rumors that bringing Reimondo back was planned, with help from the Town Council majority, by stating that he wouldn’t have offered Reimondo a retirement package if that were the case. “If the plan was for Matt to stay, I would have just had that be the contract,” he said.

Town Council Chairwoman Sue Weintraub confirmed Wednesday that she spoke with Maniscalco earlier in the week about scheduling a special meeting, as Weintraub is the only individual with the authority to do so. Although the meeting didn’t take place, Weintraub reiterated that no action would have been taken on the decision at the meeting, as it’s Maniscalco’s choice of who to appoint.

Weintraub also said that multiple emails were sent over the weekend to all members of the Town Council, keeping them abreast of the

progress of appointing an interim.

A veteran of the council and the controversy surrounding the department, Weintraub also had strong words for Hintz and the opponents of the decision. “This echoes of former administrations, which felt that they could do the town manager’s job,” she said. “The police department has been politicized in the past, and I don’t think we should allow it to be politicized in the future.”

Ultimately, she stood by Maniscalco’s decision. “Based on the facts that have come to light, I agree,” she said.

Barbara Moore, another veteran of the Town Council, didn’t see it that way. “I’m disappointed in the decision, and that we didn’t know about it,” Moore said Wednesday. “We weren’t asked to weigh in on it at all.”

Moore stressed that it was “the process” of how the decision was made, and not the decision itself, that drew her ire.

“We’ve been working together for months now, and I feel like that door’s been shut,” she said. “And I don’t think that most residents are happy. I don’t have a confident feeling.”

Councilor Kyle Dostaler, who was at last Friday’s press conference, said Wednesday that the town should be looking forward and not to the past.

“To make issue of this is a poor decision,” he said. “The town needs to move on in a positive way. Would we have preferred to meet, and be better informed? Of course. But hopefully, cooler heads prevail.”

Maniscalco had similar sentiments, stating Wednesday that his biggest priority in the situation is beginning the search for a permanent police chief. Maniscalco said that he has “been working as diligently as possible to make that happen,” and that finding a police chief “really should be what everyone is talking about.”

Last Friday, the town posted the police chief opening to multiple law enforcement outlets, as well as the town’s website. Maniscalco said the town has already received several applications and will begin working to establish a list of candidates for interviews over the next month.

Reimondo could not be reached for comment this week.

Portland Selectmen Approve New Town Assessor

by Joshua Anusewicz

At its meeting on Wednesday night, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the appointment of Richard Lasky, who had been appraiser for the town of Monroe, as the town’s newest tax assessor.

Lasky, a Bristol resident, was selected by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield to replace Nicole Lintereur, who had served as the town’s assessor beginning in 2007 before taking the same position in Glastonbury last November. Lasky, Bransfield said, has experience in both the public and private sector, including employment with CLT Tyler, an appraisal firm that handles the revaluation process for Portland.

Bransfield said it wasn’t just Lasky’s personal qualifications, but his demeanor that made him suitable for the position.

“I think your personality will be a wonderful fit for our town,” said Bransfield to Lasky. “I think you’ll enjoy working here.”

And Lasky is ready to start.

“I’m really looking forward to working here with everyone,” Lasky said at Wednesday’s meeting, adding that he prefers working closely with everyone and his “door is always open.”

He didn’t have long to wait to start – Lasky started on Thursday morning.

The town is also moving forward with the development of the Goodrich Property – now referred to as the Route 17 Recreational Complex – as the selectmen approved design firm Weston & Sampson of Rocky Hill to provide preliminary ideas for the property.

The company was recommended to the board by the committee tasked with overseeing the development of the property, which was purchased by the town in 2006 for \$510,000. The 23-acre property, located north of Bartlett Street between Route 17A (Gospel Lane) and Strickland Street, has been tabbed as the future site of a town recreation complex, which would possibly feature athletic fields, walking paths, tennis and basketball courts, a playground, and concessions stands.

In January 2012, the town received a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant of \$230,000 for the design aspect of the project. This will include surveying, wetlands assessment, environmental testing, traffic engineering and architectural and landscaping work.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 20, at 7:30 p.m. at Portland Library, 20 Free-stone Ave.

Gaudinski Proposes \$4.54 Million Town Operations Budget in Marlborough

by Melissa Roberto

First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski Tuesday offered a first look at the proposed town operations general government budget of \$4,537,419 for the 2013-14 fiscal year.

The proposed spending package – which does not factor in the proposed \$7,367,484 Board of Education budget – is a 2.64 percent increase, or \$116,670, over current year spending, or \$4,420,749.

Gaudinski said the largest factor in the proposed operational budget is the health insurance account.

While Gaudinski said the numbers will be changing over the next few months, she said the placeholder for health insurance is proposed at \$356,379, a 24.41 percent increase over the current year, or \$286,444.

Worker's compensation is anticipated to increase by 15 percent in the insurance and bonds line item under the administrative expenses account. Although worker's compensation is not a separate figure, the insurance and bonds account is proposed at \$107,808, up from the cur-

rent \$98,890.

Gaudinski said the worker's compensation increase primarily comes from Board of Education claims.

"The trend has been high for the last two years," Gaudinski said of claim history.

In past Board of Education meetings, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz explained that worker's compensation claims have been unusual this year with two employees on long-term medical leave.

Gaudinski then said placeholders for life and dental insurance are proposed at 5 percent each – placeholders that she said are on the "high side" because "it's always easier to adjust downward."

Dental insurance in the current year is at \$16,429, and with the 5 percent increase it is anticipated at \$20,796.

At the same percentage rate, life insurance will increase from the current spending of \$5,538, to a proposed \$6,579.

The second largest account of the town's

operational budget is in the salaries account, Gaudinski informed the board.

Gaudinski's salary is proposed at \$72,876 for next year, a 2 percent increase over the current \$71,447 – an amount Gaudinski said has been "flat for two years."

The remaining two selectmen, Dick Shea and Michael Gut, will receive a 1 percent increase in their stipends proposing \$4,034 for 2013-14 from the current \$3,994 salary.

Gaudinski also highlighted the hiring of five new fire fighters for the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department, which she said also impacts the 2013-14 budget.

The fire department's protective gear account is anticipated to rise from the current \$4,000 to \$10,000 in order to supply equipment for the new fire fighters. Also, the educational dues and expenses are anticipated to climb from \$7,280 in the current year to a proposed \$10,000 which will cover proper training for the new recruits.

Despite the increases, Gaudinski said Marlborough will benefit from the five new

firefighters.

"That's the good part of it...we have some new volunteers willing to make the time commitment for the town," she said.

Also in a change of pace from recent years, Gaudinski said there is a proposed \$20,000 for catch basin cleaning in the contracted services account – an item that hasn't been funded for "a number of years," she said.

The catch basin cleaning will prevent flooding and provide proper drainage in the town's streets, Gaudinski said.

Also during Tuesday night's meeting, the board appointed Marlborough residents Manny Catarino to fulfill a spot on the RHAM Board of Education that was recently vacated by Jim Cherry, and Susan Jacobsen as a member of the Conservation Committee.

Both appointments were endorsed by the Marlborough Democratic Town Committee.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 19, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

String of Local Burglaries in Marlborough Raise Concern

by Melissa Roberto

A pattern of three home burglaries in a span of six days raised eyebrows in Marlborough at the end of January, and state police have identified a vehicle that may be linked to one of the incidents.

The three burglaries occurred between Jan. 23 and Jan. 29, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., and forced entry was made into each home through a rear or front door, Marlborough Resident State Trooper Jeff Dunshee confirmed.

The first burglary took place Jan. 23 at approximately 12:18 p.m. at a residence on Jones Hollow Road, state police said. According to a news release at the State Police Troop K barracks in Colchester, entry was gained through the front door and both jewelry and cash were taken from inside of the home.

Just four days later, on Jan. 27, Dunshee said a home was broken into on South Main Street and suspects gained entry through a rear basement door. Dunshee confirmed that items were also taken from the home.

The most recent burglary took place on Jan. 29 at approximately 1:30 p.m. on Flood Road. Dunshee said an eyewitness saw a mid-1990s maroon Chevrolet S10 Blazer SUV parked on the road that afternoon, and then later saw the same vehicle backing down the driveway of the victim's home.

Dunshee said the Blazer is a "vehicle of interest" linked to the Jan. 29 burglary, but he does not know if the vehicle is linked to the two other burglaries.

State Police asks anyone seeing a vehicle matching that description to call Troop K at 860-537-7500.

In addition, State Police asks that if anyone sees suspicious activity to report it immediately.

The three burglaries are currently being investigated by Dunshee. He added that Glastonbury Police is also assisting in the search, and that different leads have been developed.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Troop K at 860-537-7500.

Fake Bomb Culprit in East Hampton Facing Federal Charges

by Joshua Anusewicz

An East Hampton man arrested last month for placing a fake bomb at an East Hampton school is now facing federal charges in connection with the incident.

In a release from David B. Fein, U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut, and Kimberly K. Mertz, Special Agent in Charge of the New Haven Division of the FBI, it was announced that Sean Doran, 20, 59 S. Main St., was indicted by a federal grand jury last Thursday, Jan. 31, and charged with one count of intentionally conveying false or misleading information and a hoax by leaving a fake bomb device at the front doors of East Hampton Middle School on Jan. 12.

Doran pleaded not guilty to the charge and was released on \$50,000 bond, the release stated. If convicted of the charge, Doran could face up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

"As alleged, the defendant purposefully placed a fake bomb right at the door of a Connecticut middle school," stated Fein. "Hoaxes threaten the sense of security that children and teachers are entitled to enjoy in their school. This indictment should be a clear signal that all threats to schools will be vigorously investigated by my office."

"The indictment of Mr. Doran should be a warning to those individuals who choose to disrupt and threaten everyday public life, hoax or no hoax," Mertz added. "Placing a hoax

bomb in a public location is criminal. Placing it outside a school is absolutely appalling. The FBI and its law enforcement partners will work tirelessly to bring to justice those responsible for such criminal conduct."

According to East Hampton Police, Doran and his girlfriend, Kayla Sypek, 20, of 17 Staeth Rd., were identified by a security camera at the school in the early morning hours of Jan. 12, and Doran placed the fake bomb at the front entrance of the school. Custodians preparing the school for a youth basketball league discovered the package later that morning. The school was temporarily shut down and the package was inspected by the Connecticut State Police Bomb Squad, which determined the bomb was a fake.

Police arrested both Doran and Sypek later that day, charging both with charged first-degree reckless endangerment, first-degree threatening, and first-degree breach of peace. The two are due appear in Middletown Superior Court on Thursday, March 14, at 10 a.m. to enter their pleas.



Sean Doran

Colchester Burglary Suspects Flee from Police

by Melissa Roberto

Two suspects in a Jan. 29 burglary of a residence on Deep River Road fled on foot after being stopped in connection with the incident, Colchester Police said.

The burglary was reported at approximately 6 p.m., police said. Following the burglary, police located a car pulled over on the side of a road in Colchester. When officers approached the car, it drove away, prompting them to pull the vehicle over. Upon being stopped, two occupants of the vehicle got out of the car and ran on foot into the woods.

The operator of the vehicle, Matthew McDonald, 24, of 15 Thames Terr., Apt. 1, Norwich, remained inside, however, and was

arrested in connection to the incidents. Police found jewelry inside the suspect's vehicle as well.

McDonald was charged with conspiracy to commit, operating under a suspended license, third-degree burglary and fifth-degree larceny.

A police dog was called in to track the fleeing suspects, but no one was found, police said. Police said arrest warrants are currently being prepared in connection with the case.

Colchester Police Officer Eric Watrous is currently investigating the incident, and he was unable to be reached to receive further information.

Two Men Arrested in Colchester Jewelry Burglary

by Melissa Roberto

A Colchester jewelry store was broken into last weekend, resulting in the arrest of two local men.

At approximately 12:20 a.m. Feb. 3, State Police were dispatched to The Jewelry Connection located at 27 Lebanon Ave. in response to the store's burglary alarm.

Upon arrival, troopers found the front glass door smashed and several items had been taken, police said.

A police dog was called in to help track the suspects, and was successful in locating the two accused individuals.

State Police said Sean M. Carey, 19, of 43 Broadway Ave. Apt. 1, and Jacob Dupre, 19, of 37 Lakeview Dr. were taken into custody without incident, police said.

The men were charged with two counts of second-degree burglary, two counts of first-degree criminal mischief and two counts of third-degree larceny, police said.

The two appeared in Norwich Superior Court on Monday and are next due in court on Feb. 19 at 10 a.m. They are being held on a \$50,000 bond.

East Hampton School Spending Proposed to Climb 5.94 Percent

by Joshua Anusewicz

Interim Superintendent of Schools Mark Winzler had a simple request when he presented his proposed 2013-14 education budget to the Board of Education last Thursday: "don't faint."

Though none of the board members hit the deck, the figures presented were a significant jump from the current year, as Winzler proposed a \$28,296,206 spending, a \$1,585,366, or 5.94 percent, increase. After much deliberation and two referendums, the current fiscal year budget was approved at \$26.71 million, a 1.90 percent increase from the 2011-12 fiscal year.

Winzler, who has grabbed the reins firmly since his appointment as interim last month, strongly defended the proposed budget by urging the board to focus less on the financial aspect and more on the impact the budget has on the education of the district's students.

"[This budget] is a lot more than just numbers," Winzler stated. "Don't focus on the numbers; focus on the faces of the students. I didn't just take what was done [with the budget by former superintendent Dr. Judith Golden prior to her retirement], I spoke with administration and central office staff. Everything was scrutinized."

Winzler continued, "Due to the economic situation, it's caused us to march in place. If we're not walking, we're actually going back a step."

The allusion to "going back a step" was in relation to the district's technological resources, an aspect of the district that most agree has been sorely lacking in recent years. (In the current year's budget, the district did not increase funding for technology.) With that in mind, Winzler earmarked \$100,000 for technology in his pro-

posed budget, which would be used to overhaul the district's network equipment – in use since 1999 – computer repair and replacement, and software and fiber optic wiring that allow for faster, more efficient computer use, particularly for the state's upcoming standardized testing and teacher evaluation initiatives.

"Technology is way below par," said Winzler, as the majority of board members nodded their heads, adding that the school's network – and, in turn, the town's network, as the town's servers are housed in the high school – has gone down multiple times in recent months.

Despite the sizeable increase in technology, the major impetus for the increase is firmly planted where it usually is: salaries. Certified salaries would increase \$457,405, or 3.4 percent, up to \$13,866,560, while classified salaries would increase \$138,807, or 4 percent, up to \$3,578,065. These figures include the retirements of four certified, full-time positions so far, but also include the addition of five new certified positions: an English teacher and chorus teacher at the high school, two teachers for the expansion of all-day kindergarten (proposed in response to the new Common Core State Standards), and a special education instructor that will be shared between all four schools.

Current estimates for health insurance costs also show a significant increase, up \$172,265, or 4.4 percent, to \$4,056,900 from the current fiscal year; the actual cost, however, will not be known until negotiations with the insurance company are complete in May.

Salaries and insurance alone, Winzler emphasized, make up roughly 80 percent of the education budget. "That's not uncommon,"

Winzler assured.

But the hardest pill to swallow, Winzler said, is the amount the district is forced to spend on magnet schools. Winzler stated that since 2007-08, the number of East Hampton children attending magnet schools has jumped from just seven to 76 this year. The town is forced by the state to pay for the tuition and transportation of these students, Winzler said, which is expected to cost roughly \$140,000.

"It's at no cost to the parents. It's a no-brainer," Winzler stated. He added that 13 of those 76 students are in preschool or kindergarten, meaning "they aren't even giving you [the district] a chance...so we need to become more competitive to keep those students here."

Though the budget figures show a significant increase, Winzler added that only 1.7 percent of the increase could be considered "new stuff," such as the new positions and technology upgrades. Even with a flat budget, Winzler said the district would still see a 4.2 percent increase, due mostly to negotiated salaries; that means, he added, that one of the only ways to lower the increase would be by "getting rid of people," something the board has vehemently opposed.

Last Thursday's meeting did not include any comment on the budget from board members, who held two budget workshops this week – one on Monday, and one yesterday after press time. On Monday, Winzler presented the board members with a packet that answered questions that the board had regarding the budget, which included food services, textbooks, enrollment, all-day kindergarten and comparisons to simi-

lar and neighboring towns.

Winzler once again assured the board that all of the requests were necessary. "Nothing I presented to you is frivolous," he stated.

Winzler also invited Tom McMahon, the school district's technology administrator, to break down the technology upgrades proposed. McMahon stated that while a lot was being asked out of the budget for technology, the requests were, as Winzler stated, necessary.

"In the past we've been reactive," McMahon said of the district's approach to technology. "We need to be more proactive than reactive."

Assistant Superintendent Kevin Reich agreed. "We're going nowhere without [the technology upgrades]," he said.

Deliberations on the education budget will continue over the next month, board chairman Mark Laraia said Wednesday, and the board expects to present the budget to the Board of Finance by the end of February. Laraia stated that while the salaries and insurance drive much of increase, the time is now for the board to act on its sub-par technology.

"Some time, we have to move forward," he said. "I realize the numbers are high now; I live here and I pay taxes, too. But we can't stay with the status quo."

And ultimately, the decision on the budget will be out of the board's hands. "I always say, 'Let the town vote on it,'" Laraia said.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 11, at 6 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

Camping in the Cold for a Cause in Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

There was a rather bitter chill in the air last weekend, but that did not stop four residents from camping out at the Town Green for the fourth annual "Freezin' for a Reason," event to raise money for the Colchester Fuel Bank.

The four men – Colchester Business Association President Fred Brown, Police Sergeant Rob Suchecki, Colchester Hayward Fire Department Chief Walter Cox and selectman Stan Soby – said they brought several layers of clothing to keep warm during the event, which started Friday, Feb. 1 at 3 p.m. and lasted until Sunday at noon.

The event raises awareness for individuals in town that struggle to pay for heat in their homes. It also raises money for the Colchester Fuel Bank, a fund that allows emergency oil delivery to residents in need.

"Every dollar that's contributed goes directly to helping somebody keep warm and have heat in their house," said Soby.

The volunteers raised about \$6,500, just shy of their \$7,000 goal. However, it is still an increase from last year's event which collected about \$5,200.

Brown, who spearheaded the event four years ago in an effort to "do something different" to give back to the community, said he was "very happy" with the amount of money collected this year.

"The people of Colchester and surrounding communities never really let us down," said Brown. "They always come through to support one another."

Suchecki said this year's winter has been colder than last year, which means people will continue to struggle with their heat expenses,

he said.

Also joining residents on the green were 10 Boy Scouts from Troop 109, about three times the amount that participated last year, Brown said.

The scouts lined the Town Green last Friday night waving signs to draw attention to the cause. They also prepared food on Saturday for the volunteers including egg sandwiches for breakfast, cold cut sandwiches for lunch and ended the day by providing pasta and salad for the volunteers.

Assistant Scoutmaster Dean Berube said the event gave the scouts an opportunity to gain badges and put in community service hours.

The local Starbucks also donated coffee and breakfast each morning for the volunteers.

As for the weather, Brown said Friday night was the coldest with a low of 14 degrees "that felt like seven degrees."

The below-freezing weather continued, with a high of 30 degrees on Saturday that eventually dropped to the teens with wind gusts ranging from nine to 24 mph, according to weather.com.

Participants of the event also awoke Sunday morning to a dusting of snow on the green.

The event made scouts and residents aware of just how cold the winter can be without heat. In addition to assembling around a fire for most of the weekend, Soby said volunteers brought "multiple layers of everything."

Aside from raising money for a cause, Brown said another aspect of the event he enjoys is seeing younger kids come out to the green.

"It was very nice to see parents bring their kids and teach them what they're doing and why they're doing it, to instill the same kind of



Residents and local Boy Scouts camped out at the Colchester Town Green last weekend to raise money for the town's fuel bank. Pictured from left is Fire Chief Walter Cox, Assistant Scout Master Rick Keller, Selectman Stan Soby, Colchester Police Sergeant Rob Suchecki, resident Fred Brown, Assistant Scout Master Dean Berube and nine scouts from Troop 109 who helped raise \$6,500 for the cause.

volunteerism in them," he said.

Although the event is over, Brown said it's never too late for individuals to donate. Residents can make donations to "Three Men in a Tent" at Rockville Bank, located at 99 Linwood Ave. or continue to make donations at the Colchester Fuel Bank located at Town Hall.

Brown said residents should expect to see the men and the tents next year, as the four men have already agreed to keep the tradition running.

"It makes all the difference in terms of people being able to survive and maintain their home," said Brown.

Hebron School Board Approves \$12.17 Million Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

The local Board of Education has approved a \$12,168,256 budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year. The number is an increase of \$277,138, or 2.33 percent, over current year spending.

The 6-1 approval, with board member Amy Lynch-Gracias opposed, came at the Jan. 24 meeting of the school board.

The approved budget is slightly larger than what was first proposed at a December Board of Education meeting. The spending plan proposed at that meeting called for a 2.20 percent increase over the current year. However, the planned insurance cost then rose an additional \$51,821, bringing it to \$2,139,891, or 24.95 percent more than the current year. (The initial budget proposal called for insurance to rise 20 percent from the 2012-13 year.) With the increase in insurance, the employee benefit line – which also includes Social Security, pension plans, tuition reimbursement, unemployment and worker's compensation – clocks in at \$2,549,223 in the approved budget.

Salaries came in at \$7,545,162, which is a 3.4 percent decrease over the current year's \$7,814,311 while professional services, which include items such as staff development, AHM Youth Services, pupil services and legal fees, amounted to \$440,741, a 4.7 percent decrease over the current year's \$462,454.

Property Services including electricity and contracted services was approved at \$393,113 while "other purchased services," which includes student transportation and special education and magnet school tuition, was approved at \$688,276.

Supplies and materials came in at \$529,905 while capital outlay was approved at \$9,000 and dues and fees and meetings amounted to \$12,836.

Board of Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea said that if it weren't for the insurance increase, the education budget would actually be a decrease from the prior year's budget. She stressed that the board was able to keep the school budget at \$12.17 million and "we still were able to

absorb all of the union contract requirements and all of the other prices that went up that we have to pay."

In order to offset the insurance costs that hiked up the budget, the board made a number of cuts in addition to those that were discussed during its December meeting.

For a \$23,000 savings, acting Superintendent of Schools Kathy Veronesi said a bus could be eliminated. Veronesi said she'd spoken with the bus company, First Student, which felt the elimination would be okay. Based upon the number of parents who are driving and picking up their kids and a decrease of about 85 students next year Veronesi said the feeling was "the routes would not be much longer."

But Veronesi mentioned there were some potential downsides to the elimination. She said there would be more kids on the buses, and noted that's where the majority of discipline problems occur.

"There's a lot to consider," Veronesi said. "I just wanted you to know when I go to First Student to ask about this and ask and ask again, [the company] feels confident that given the number of students who ride the bus – not just the projected but the number who are parent drop-offs and pick-ups – that [they] did not think that there would be a significant increase in length of bus ride."

In the end, the board felt the \$23,000 savings would be worthwhile, and they voted unanimously to approve the elimination.

In addition to the bus, another \$26,210 in savings was realized through the removal of money used as a placeholder for interns from the University of New Haven. Veronesi explained a number of interns used to come to the schools, but they hadn't been able to draw any in a number of years. In addition she explained teachers became used to having substitutes instead, so that money was moved over to the substitute line.

"However, in looking at the budget for next year and using past years as a predictor for the

salary line's ability to cover the substitute line, we felt that was a cut that we could suggest for this year," Veronesi said.

There was also a \$15,444 reduction from the removal of money set aside to support the salary for the teacher in the School Readiness Program. This was possible because enough money was received from the program's tuition costs to cover the salary.

Smaller reductions included \$2,217 savings in certified salaries from a teacher step adjustment and \$883 from the cost of heating oil and diesel fuel.

But there were some other additions as well. A change in the formula from the state Department of Education meant the school was responsible for \$12,260 more in special education tuition costs, bringing the total to \$148,830. An additional \$2,400 was also placed in the stipend line and there was an \$880 salary increase in the technology line.

The board also voted to increase substitute pay to \$75 per day for the 2013-14 year. Shea said she was in favor of the \$5 raise, and noted there hadn't been a raise in six years.

"In order to retain our good substitutes, to keep them from going to RHAM or other schools, I think it's about time we consider the raise," she said.

Veronesi said the schools currently have a "consistent group" of "very high-quality substitutes" that they pull from, and Shea added "it would be nice to reward them and retain them."

The board voted 6-1 in favor of the raise, with Lynch-Gracias, who said she felt now wasn't the best time for the raise, against.

On the budget as a whole, Lynch-Gracias said she appreciated the work that had been placed into it, but she couldn't support the numbers.

"Unfortunately it's not just about me and my opinion," she said. "It's also about those folks who take the time to talk to me about their feelings. I'm hearing they can't handle this kind of

increase. So despite the way I feel about the budget and whether or not I feel we have properly funded some areas and under-funded others, the bottom line is this 2.33 percent increase I can't support."

But other members said the board had done everything they could.

"We've scrutinized all the line items as best we can and have been very thoughtful," said board member Tina Marie Blinn, adding the board had given rationale as to why things are needed.

William Moorcroft commented on the "great amount of work" the board, administrators and everyone involved put into the budget in order to present "a reasonable budget given the challenges."

"So I think it's reasonable and I appreciate all the extra work Kathy [Veronesi] and her team did to bring it down," he said. "I think it sends a message that we were willing to go back and sharpen our pencils and look at different things... I support it and I appreciate your work."

While he ultimately voted in favor of the budget, school board member Dominic Marino said the proposed spending plan put him in "a hard place."

"I think the board should go to referendum and see what [the voters] have to say... I don't know what else we can take out," he said.

Marino added he knew his constituents couldn't afford the budget but he didn't see how the board could do it any differently.

"We went over it with a fine-toothed comb," he said. "We investigated it. We did what we could. It's that insurance cost. I don't know what else I could do for the voters, I really don't. It's very uncomfortable and distressing to see the community go through this because they just don't have the money but that's what it is. We have to pay the insurance costs."

With the board's approval, the proposal \$12,168,256 budget is now headed to the Board of Selectmen.

New Administrative Assistant at Andover Town Hall

by Geeta Schrayter

Things are neater in First Selectman Bob Burbank's office, now that he has the help of an administrative assistant. Andover resident Penelope Auer began working in his office the week of Jan. 7 at a rate of \$12 per hour – and so far, so good.

"Basically we're doing kind of the basic stuff right now," Burbank said, "but it seems to be working out very well."

"Things have been going great," Auer said Wednesday. "Bob hasn't had an assistant for five years, so there's a lot of work here to just get things a little more organized."

Auer said she was learning the flow of the office and working with Burbank to set up some better filing systems. That way they'll know where things are located and Auer will have access to information she may need to answer resident's questions when Burbank is out.

Burbank said Auer's pay is not to exceed \$6,000 annually. She'll be working two days a week, usually Mondays and Wednesdays, with those days to change as needed. Adding money for an administrative assistant was deliberated – and approved – during the 2012-13 budget process and during that time, a list of duties was presented in order to justify the position.

According to the list provided by the Board of Selectmen, along with normal clerical activities, Auer's work includes: providing information to and updating the town website;

assisting Burbank in the preparation of grant applications (which the list described as an important feature that "on its own can reimburse or support the salary being paid"); reporting residents' concerns to the first selectman, conducting research, keeping track of filing dates for various state and federal forms and aiding in the preparation and forwarding of such forms and serving as the board clerk for meetings held during business hours.

"My office is certainly getting neater," Burbank said of Auer's work. "I put her on straightening up and organizing initially, so that's basically what we're trying to accomplish and she's done some filing and some phone duties – some of the basic stuff. We haven't really gotten into all of her activities until we get in a little better shape."

But Auer is already preparing for those other activities. She said that while she doesn't have any background in grant writing, she's begun reading some of the office tutorials in order to familiarize herself.

As for why she applied for this position, Auer said, "This seemed like a challenge in terms of being able to work with Bob and help get him organized and maybe improve the flow of what happens in this office. He's one person trying to do a lot of things for this town."

But with Auer's help, the hope is that Burbank will be able to do all those things a bit easier – and in a neater office, too.

Windham Hospital to Open Offices in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

In order to provide more services to the Hebron community, Windham Hospital is planning to open medical offices in town with a focus on women's health.

The hospital, which is part of the Hartford HealthCare Medical Group, is expected to open the offices in April. Included will be physicians specializing in obstetrics and gynecology (ob-gyn) from the Mansfield ob-gyn practice as well as Clinical Lab Partners, a laboratory service under Hartford Healthcare.

The new offices will be located on Liberty Drive, in the former home of Hebron Eye Care.

Michael Dion, vice president of patient care services for Windham Hospital, explained this week the decision to bring medical offices to town stemmed from a focus group held last summer. Dion said in looking at the number of patients that came to Windham Hospital from Hebron, it was noted the number was rather small.

"We really felt that we could provide more services within the community given the fact that health care is moving more toward an ambulatory setting, where you want patients to get the services closer to home," he said.

Dion added hospital officials also felt an area where they weren't providing many services in the Hebron vicinity was women's health, so a focus group with about 15 women from town was conducted in order to determine what services they felt were needed.

"In essence what came out is they wanted a

facility that would provide as many services as possible in one area," he said. "So what we are currently planning on in response to that is a women's health center."

The ob-gyn physicians will be available four days a week, and Dion said the hospital was looking to add other physicians to the facility one day per week. In addition to the physicians and lab services, there will also be bone density testing and mammography.

Town Planner Mike O'Leary said Wednesday that all of the necessary permits had been issued and work retrofitting the 2,000 square feet they'll be occupying at 21 Liberty Dr., Unit A, was underway. He added he was happy the new medical offices were coming to town.

"I think it's great news for Hebron," he said. "It provides a great convenience to Hebron residents and interest from that large of a facility is great for economic development."

Town Manager Andy Tierney agreed.

"I think that's a great thing. It's wonderful. We've met with them, they seem very nice and they're going to be moving in a lot of equipment which will be prospective property taxes for next year," he said. "We welcome them and we hope they do well over there."

Dion said the hope is patients will access this new facility "and ultimately improve their health."

"From a hospital perspective we just see this as the beginning of being able to provide services in the community," he said.

Andover Rec Complex Plans Hit Speed Bump

by Geeta Schrayter

First Selectman Bob Burbank announced a hiccup in the plans to move forward with the Long Hill Road Recreation Complex at Wednesday's meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Burbank explained that after CLA Engineers, Inc., the company who had been hired as the engineer for the project, began looking at the property, it was discovered it wouldn't be feasible to place a baseball field in that area due to the wetlands.

"The property that we had originally looked at which was directly adjacent to the existing ball field, once you went back, passed a little bit of the ridge there and came into wetlands," Burbank explained.

He said the people who had looked at that piece of land initially didn't have the information to look at it properly or perform any type of study on the land and soil.

In response to the discovery, Burbank said the suggestion was for the engineer to look at some other areas in town.

But selectwoman Julia Haverl was upset at the idea of the complex being anywhere but where it had been initially approved.

"The town voted to do it there," she said. "To get to this point and then say 'oops we can't do it there,' that's a big 'oops.'"

But Burbank said if the engineers found a different area that was more suitable, it would then be taken back to the town for a vote.

"We'll go back to the town if we feel it's necessary," he said. "Then if they want to scrap the project [because it's in a different area] then that will be up to the town."

Burbank added about 70 acres behind the elementary school that the town owns was the other site that came to mind after the Long Hill Road property was deemed unfit. The issue had only come up this week, he said, and the engineer had been given the coordinates to examine the new area.

"So he's going to put that into GPS mapping and let me know if he thinks that has some potential and if he thinks so we'll go forward," he said, adding, "I would anticipate probably within the next 30 days at least to get an initial evaluation."

* * *

Also at the meeting, the board unanimously approved three capital requests from the Capi-

tal Improvement Planning Committee (CIP) for the 2013-14 budget year. The first request is for \$7,124 to buy 10 new portable radios for the fire department. The second request is \$75,760 for the replacement of 16 Scott Air Packs and third, \$37,000 for five years in order to lease-to-own a large angled plow truck to replace the 1987 truck the town already has.

"All of these projects were deemed necessary to be completed between July 2013 and June 2014," selectwoman Elaine Buchardt, who is also the chair of the CIP Committee, wrote in a memo. The first and second requests, she said, "concerns the safety of our volunteer firemen during actual firefighting activities." The third request, she added, "will allow for the town to have a fleet of at least three reliable large plow trucks and one back-up truck."

The approved requests total \$119,884 and will now be sent to the Board of Finance for review.

* * *

The board also approved a \$175,000 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP)

grant to replace the Times Farm Road Bridge. The grant was awarded last month and will cover 20 percent of the bridge's repair costs that the town was responsible for.

The bridge is being repaired as part of the state's Local Bridge Program which "provides for state grants and loans to municipalities for the removal, replacement, reconstruction and rehabilitation of local bridges," according to the state government website ct.gov.

Under the program, 80 percent of the costs will be reimbursed to the town. And now, the remaining 20 percent will be covered with the grant.

"We went ahead and requested a STEAP grant to pick up that 20 percent so the cost to taxpayers would be zero," he said.

The grant was unanimously approved.

* * *

The next regular Board of Selectmen meeting will be held Wednesday, March 6, at 7 p.m., in the Town Office Building, 17 School Rd. The selectmen also scheduled a special meeting for Monday, Feb. 11, at 9 a.m.

Colchester Board Members Agree to Take Time with Building Project

by Melissa Roberto

The boards of selectmen, education and finance met with the Building Committee to discuss the status of the proposed William J. Johnston Middle School/Community Center/Senior Center project – which would combine a town senior center, community center and middle school all in one building – and the officials agreed it wouldn't be possible to get the proposal passed by the voters in time for a June deadline for state reimbursement.

Last month, Tecton Architects released a \$68.5 million cost estimate for the project, a figure that includes \$48.10 million for the school renovation and expansion; \$15.32 million to incorporate the community center; and \$5.08 million for the senior center.

Construction of the project includes renovation to the existing middle school to include the sixth grade, a three-story addition to include seventh and eighth grades, a community center and senior center inside the existing school, removal of the 1954 eighth-grade wing and new parking lots for both the school and senior center.

The middle school currently has several damages, town officials have said in meetings over the past few weeks. Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Mathieu highlighted the major deficiencies of the school Wednesday that he said "need" to be repaired.

"The school needs a \$350,000 boiler," he said. "There are windows that have been bolted shut because they've fallen out."

But a topic that board members had difficulty determining Wednesday was whether or not it was possible to submit the project to the State Connecticut Bureau of School Facilities by the June 30 deadline.

"Time is of the essence," said Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein in the begin-

ning of the meeting.

In order to meet the June 30 deadline, Financial Advisor Maggie Cosgrove said a referendum would need to take place in May. She then said in order to have a May referendum, the town boards would need to approve the project in March and have a town meeting in April. The May referendum, she said, would potentially take place on the same night in May of the town budget referendum.

But moving forward with the project during the budget process was something that concerned a majority of the board members.

"We have to be working on it at the same time we're working on a budget," Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov said. "I'm not sure how much in depth discussion and debate we can have on this thing in such a limited time."

While Goldstein admitted the project was "innovative" and "meets a lot of needs" he, too, expressed concern. "I'm not sensing that anyone, and I include me in that, is entirely comfortable trying to move forward with a 68.5 million dollar project," he said.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster communicated several other capital needs in Colchester: roads, fire department equipment, "large vehicles" including excavators, and an "inadequate" Public Works facility.

Board of Education member Michael Egan asked the committee and board members whether they have considered separating the project into a school portion and a community portion. He added that the Board of Education is currently facing "issues as far as occupying the school if this thing doesn't move forward."

Building Committee members said they have talked about the possibility, but have agreed they do not want to see the project split up.

"If we separate them we're separating the

support of the community," said Tom Tyler, chairman of the committee.

Building Committee member Paul Picard added that it would cost the town more money in the end to take on each building in a separate project.

While the conversation mainly expressed concerns with moving the project along to meet the June 30 deadline, Goldstein said there is a possibility to extend the deadline.

In fact, the deadline was extended to November of last year for the same reasons.

Tecton Architects project manager Marco Tommasini explained that a year ago, on the same day as the meeting, Tecton were ready to produce a report of the project to the town, but it was "put on the waiting list" because of last year's concurrent budget.

If a deadline is not extended from the state, Goldstein said this would place the project into next year's cycle for the state School Bureau of Facilities. He also said the proposed enrollment decline would cause the state to reimburse the town for a smaller school.

"It can be the same large project but you won't get as much reimbursement from the state" said Tommasini.

After an extensive conversation and weighing out the possibilities, the board members came to a conclusion that it would not be possible to reach the June 30 deadline during budget season. However, Goldstein said he would try to see if the June 30 deadline can be extended, possibly to November like the previous year.

Schuster agreed with the decision to move forward with the project after the budget is passed.

"I think after we pass a town budget we should move forward as quickly as possible to

finalize what the project is and to put it before the voters," he said.

In the meantime, Tommasini said he could provide "a menu of items" that would potentially reduce the scope of the project or even eliminate parts of it. Producing this menu would take about a month, he said.

Immediately following Wednesday's meeting, a budget forum was conducted by chairs of the boards of selectmen, finance and education, giving residents an opportunity to ask questions and express what they'd like to see included or excluded from next year's budget.

However, few residents showed up to the forum to state their opinions.

Resident James McNair was disappointed that residents did not show up to attend the forum. He told the board chairs that he appreciated their efforts. "You've given the public all the opportunity you can," he said.

Further communication about the building project continued throughout the forum. Two residents introduced themselves as parents and said part of the reason they moved to Colchester was because of the school system. However, they said they are concerned with the WJMS deficiencies.

WJMS Principal Christopher Bennett said that, although the school has extensive damages, it does not hinder students from receiving a good education.

"Our scores prove it and our culture proves it," he said.

Further discussion on the WJMS building project will continue throughout the building committee meetings and board members said they are interested in receiving the architect's list of options to review in the future.

The next Building Committee meeting is scheduled for Feb. 14, 7 p.m. at WJMS.

Hebron Grand List Grows Less Than 1 Percent

by Geeta Schrayter

The 2012 Grand List Totals were released last week, and while the number is still below \$800 million (a low point reached last year for the first time since 2005), at least it climbed this year – albeit by a scant .595 percent.

The amount of the Oct. 1, 2012, Net Grand List is \$772,697,085, up \$4,569,355 from last year. Real estate increased \$4,945,400 to \$668,617,670, while personal property increased \$539,950 to \$14,253,890. However motor vehicles dropped \$915,995, to \$69,825,525.

And while one town official called the slight overall growth “bittersweet,” it’s still an increase; the Oct. 1, 2011, Grand List clocked in at \$768,630,730, a 12.96 percent drop from 2010. The decrease was blamed largely on the 2011 revaluation, which resulted in lower property values.

Assessor Debbie Gernhardt explained the major increase in real estate on this year’s list was due to the addition of approximately \$1,350,000 in assessment from older building permits.

On Wednesday, Gernhardt said her predecessor in the office was “a little behind” on building permits, but during the 2011 revaluation the office was caught up.

“The system we had before was hard copy,” she said, and information would go between the building department and the assessor’s office. But now the two departments are linked electronically, making it easier to compare information.

“Now the two are linked, so we can go in and compare property record cards with building records,” she said.

During those comparisons it was discovered there were some older building permits that hadn’t yet been inspected for assessment.

“So I was able to go in and catch up with that,” said Gernhardt.

The other reason for a real estate increase was the filing of two subdivisions in town; the Grayville Road subdivision and the Grossman Property on Church Street.

The top 10 real estate taxpayers for the 2012 levy year were: Village Shoppes LLC at

\$1,995,070; Grayville Estates of Hebron LLC at \$1,717,660; Hebron Properties LLC at \$1,470,000; Blackledge Country Club Inc. at \$1,464,680; Hebron Country Manor LLC at \$1,309,770; 41-61 Main Street LLC at \$1,071,350; Holland Deborah & Jones Street LLC at \$857,920; Hayden O. Houston Jr. at \$846,930; Footehills Farm Inc. at \$760,580 and Edward A. and Renee J. Ellis at \$685,180.

Gernhardt added the Personal Property increase is primarily due to the purchase of new items by property owners.

For example, Connecticut Light & Power and the Connecticut Water Company, the top two personal property taxpayers for the 2012 levy year, both saw an increase from the prior year. CL&P came in at \$6,721,980, up from \$6,423,170 in 2011, while Connecticut Water came in at \$1,411,340, up from \$1,576,470.

The remaining top 10 taxpayers for personal property were Ted’s Inc. at \$420,140; Connecticut Solar Leasing LLC at \$269,650; Blackledge Country Club Inc. at \$267,980; Tallwood Country Club LLC at \$261,020; Cellco Partnership

at \$259,310; Hebron Center Dentistry LLC at \$217,660; Connecticut CVS Pharmacy LLC at \$203,470; and Drake Petroleum Company Inc. at \$190,440.

“I think the staff in the [assessor’s] office here did a wonderful job,” Gernhardt said. “From what I’m seeing from a couple of towns so far it looks like Hebron had a decent increase considering the economic times.”

Town Manager Andy Tierney said the numbers were “bittersweet.”

“I’m just happy it’s not negative, but it’s a very small increase,” he said. “We’re staying stable, but it’s no big shot in the arm by any means. It’s going to be a difficult budget season and every little bit helps.”

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. If no reductions to the list are made by the Board of Assessment Appeals, Gernhardt said a mill will represent \$772,697.08.

East Hampton School Board Approves New Superintendent

by Joshua Anusewicz

At its meeting last Thursday, the Board of Education voted to enter into contract negotiations with Diane Dugas, who has been nominated as the school district’s new superintendent, a position Dugas is expected to fill beginning July 1.

The board voted 7-1 to approve the nomination; Glenn Gemma was not present at the meeting, and Bill Marshall opposed the motion, as he said he felt there was “no rush” to make an appointment, as interim superintendent Mark Winzler is due to remain with the school system through the end of June.

Dugas is currently the director of curriculum, teaching, and learning in Granby Public Schools. Prior to that, Dugas served one year as the superintendent of schools for Region 4, which covers the towns of Deep River, Essex, and Chester.

“She has a really good handle on the common core and teacher evaluation,” Chairman

Mark Laraia said of Dugas. “We feel she’ll be able to follow through with what [former Superintendent of School] Dr. [Judith] Golden started.”

“This was an exhaustive interview process,” said board member Josh Piteo. “I enthusiastically support this nomination.”

According to Laraia, the district has offered Dugas a three-year contract where she would earn \$162,000 per year. Laraia said the contract is being looked over by both sides and legal counsel before approval, which he said he hopes will take place within the next week.

Dugas will take the place of Interim Superintendent Mark Winzler, who was appointed on Jan. 1 following the retirement of Golden last year. Golden served as the superintendent of East Hampton schools for six years.

Dugas could not be reached for comment this week.

Colchester Police News

1/18: Orion Huse, 21, of 4 Tavern Ln., was charged with first-degree sexual assault, third-degree strangulation and two counts of reckless endangerment, State Police said.

1/26: Matthew D. Watahalo, 30, of 462 Ridge Rd., Wethersfield was charged with evading, traveling unreasonably fast for conditions and failure to drive right at slow speed, Colchester Police said.

1/27: Colchester Police are currently investigating a burglary that occurred on Mahoney Road sometime between Jan. 26 and Jan. 27. The front door of the residence was forced open and items were stolen from inside the residence. If anybody has information please contact the Colchester Police at 860-537-7270.

1/27: Christopher J. Hills, 29, of 135 Boston Hill Rd., Andover, was charged with DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple lane highway, Colchester Police said.

1/27: Colchester Police said a 17-year-old juvenile was charged with operating a motor vehicle without the owner’s permission.

1/28: Colchester Police said a 17-year-old juvenile was charged with drug paraphernalia and illegal possession of a narcotic.

1/28: Christopher G. MacNeil, 40, of 134 East Center St. Apt. C, Manchester, was charged

with risk of injury to a minor and breach of peace, Colchester Police said.

1/29: State Police said detectives from the Eastern District Major Crime Squad and troopers from Troop K in Colchester served an arrest warrant on James Goins, 27, of 846 Bank St., New London, on the charge of first-degree robbery. Police said the charge is in connection to a robbery that occurred on 10/28/12 at the BP Gas Station in Franklin.

1/31: Kayla O’Malley, 18, of 108 Wall St., Apt. 2, Hebron, was charged with first-degree failure to appear, Colchester Police said.

2/1: Daniel M. Duplin, 21, of 301 Elm St., Rocky Hill, was charged with DUI and reckless driving, State Police said.

1/31: Salvatore Licitra, 47, of 65 Spring Glen Rd., Niantic, was charged with first-degree larceny, State Police said.

1/31: Joshua Wetmore, 20, of 64 Brainard Rd., was charged with second-degree assault and risk of injury to a minor, State Police said.

2/1: Cody Gagne, 23, of 109 Wellswood Rd., Amston, was arrested on an active arrest warrant for traveling unreasonably fast for conditions, reckless driving, evading responsibility, making an improper turn and operating with unsafe wires, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

1/18: Stacy Rivera, 32, of 16 East High St., was involved in a one car-vs.-pole motor vehicle accident on Sillimanville Road. Rivera was issued a summons for failure to drive right, evading responsibility, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said. Jason Bernard, 33, of the same address, was issued a summons for failure to maintain minimum insurance requirements in the same incident, police added.

1/27: Ronald Allan Way, 45, of 100 Young St., was arrested for assault in the 3rd degree and disorderly conduct, East Hampton Police said.

Hebron Police News

1/30: Rachel Montes, 32, of 16 Sheffield Ln., Naugatuck, was charged with second-degree harassment, State Police said.

Portland Police News

2/3: Kyle Stolz, 40, of 340 Main St., was charged with disorderly conduct and criminal violation of restraining order, Portland Police said.

Marlborough Police News

2/1: State Police said Julie Shaw, 28, of 17 Dziok Dr., East Hampton, and Jessica Ryea, 29, of 84 Atkinson St., Bellow Falls, Vt., were both charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I came into work Monday morning to a phone message from one resident, and an emailed letter to the editor, letting me know I'd been "duped" when I wrote that piece in my column last week about Neil Heslin, the father of a Newtown shooting victim, getting interrupted at a hearing last week, when gun rights advocates interrupted his speech to declare "Second Amendment!" I was appalled by the interrupting, and said as much.

Well, apparently after I wrote my column MSNBC was "exposed" for having edited the Heslin footage to make it look like he was interrupted when he really was not. I had surely gotten my news from MSNBC, the caller and the letter writer assumed, and thus a retraction and an apology were in order.

Regular *Rivereast* readers know I have no problem owning up to a mistake if one were made. Mistakes happen sometimes, and part of my responsibility as an editor is to admit the error and try to make things right. So if I were wrong in my column last week, then yes, I'd own up to it.

But here's the thing: I'm not wrong.

First of all, I didn't know MSNBC covered Heslin's comments. I'm not surprised they did, but that's not where I first saw the video. After reading a story about it at the *Connecticut Post* website, I watched a video of the comments from a CBS News website. By this point, I had seen clips at the bottom of the page saying this was typical disgusting media bias at work; that the video had been edited to suit agendas.

Curious, I sought out the full, unedited video of Heslin's comments, which were easy enough to find, as his remarks were broadcast by CT-N, which is sort of C-SPAN for Connecticut.

And I didn't see anything to contradict what the *Connecticut Post* or CBS News had reported. As I wrote last week, Heslin wondered aloud why anyone needs an assault-style weapon or high-capacity clips. He then said, "Not one person can answer that question, or give —"

At that point, he was cut off, by the people who shouted "Second Amendment!" You can watch the video yourself (it's on Youtube, at <http://youtu.be/nvT9peqTM5E>). When he wondered why anyone needs an assault-style

weapon or high-capacity clips, did he phrase it in the form of a question? Yes. But it seemed clear to me that it was a rhetorical question. He wasn't expecting a response. Look at his face. He didn't expect an answer; he was clearly flustered. He wasn't finished with his remarks either; if he were, then the man running the hearing wouldn't have told the crowd to pipe down or he'd clear the room.

Even if you don't read the question as rhetorical, I mean, geez, there's an order to be followed here. Wait your turn to speak. You don't have to be a veteran attendee of town meetings to know this. Just proper etiquette and decency should have informed the "Second Amendment" shouters to wait until Heslin finished his remarks to provide a response. It was a public forum, not a free-for-all.

Bottom line: This wasn't me getting duped, or me intentionally lying to advance my diabolical leftist agenda (which I was also accused of possibly doing). This was my recounting of what happened when Heslin spoke, and my honest response to what happened.

As I said before, when I make mistakes, I admit to them. But in this case, I stand by what I said. I issue no retraction, and offer no apology, because frankly neither are in order.

* * *

In more pleasant news, longtime *Rivereast* readers may recall reporters Michael and Sarah (Schultz) McCoy. Sarah, a Marlborough native and RHAM High School graduate, covered Hebron and Andover, and her husband Michael covered Portland and East Hampton. They started at the paper in 2005, and they each left at the end of 2009 (well, technically Mike left in mid-January 2010) to pursue careers in the world of education.

In March 2011, a little more than a year after they left the *Rivereast*, the McCoys had a daughter, Charlotte Loretta, in March 2011. And now, I'm happy to report, they've expanded their family again. Henry Abraham McCoy was born Jan. 5 at Hartford Hospital. Sarah stopped by the office last week, both children in tow, to say hi and, of course, to fill out a birth announcement. You can look for that announcement in the Marlborough section of the paper this week.

All four McCoys are healthy and doing well, and I know all of us at the *Rivereast* — as well as you readers who have had the good fortune of meeting either of them over the years — wish Mike and Sarah the heartiest of congratulations.

* * *

Lastly, I'd be remiss if I didn't touch on this past Sunday's Super Bowl. And considering I wasn't overly invested in either team, it was a great game. I'd have preferred to see the 49ers win, and while they didn't, to their credit they certainly didn't roll over and played dead when all looked lost. After the Ravens' Jacoby Jones opened the second half with an unreal 108-yard touchdown on a kick-off return to make the score 28-6 Baltimore, it looked like this thing was pretty much done.

But then the Super Bowl turned into The Night the Lights Went Out in N'awlins. I don't know if the power outage seen 'round the world energized San Fran or what, but they came rolling back, getting as close as 31-29 at one point.

Alas, it wasn't meant to be, but still, the game kept you on the edge of your seat right until the last minute or so — and that's not always the case in the Super Bowl.

As for the ads, while it's true they seemed to have been somewhat more of a mixed bag than usual, I don't think they outright stunk, which is what a lot of people were saying Monday morning. I didn't see the big deal about the supposed "most controversial" spot, the GoDaddy commercial with the conventionally super attractive woman making out with a male teenager who was not conventionally attractive. I just thought it was dumb, and seemed like something a bunch of 12-year-old boys would cook up ("Let's have the hot chick make out with the ugly dude! And they'll make out for a long time! It'll be funny, because it'll be gross! Maybe she'll show us her boobs later! Boobs!!!!"), but I didn't find it "controversial."

One of the funniest ads was one of the ones that aired early in the game, the Hyundai commercial with the kid and his mom going around the neighborhood and recruiting other kids for a flag football game. Now that was funny. As was the Doritos spot with the goat, and the Taco Bell ad that aired later on, which featured senior citizens carrying on like a bunch of, well, teens and 20-somethings, while last year's hit "We Are Young" (in Spanish!) played in the background.

The Budweiser Clydesdale commercial was sweet, as they often are, and I liked the Paul Harvey "Farmers" spot, even if ulti-

mately it wound up just being a Dodge commercial.

It's seemed to me over the years the best ads in the Super Bowl tend to air in the first half. And that makes sense, as that's when the game is usually still the closest, and before food comas have started to set in. But this year, at the two-minute warning in the fourth quarter, one of the best commercials, a Sprint spot with Seth Rogen and Paul Rudd aired. Those two actors consistently make me laugh in just about everything they do, especially when they're together (i.e., *Knocked Up*), so it's not surprising I found the spot to be comic gold.

It was an entertaining halftime show too, with Beyonce doing a great job, and bringing back her Destiny's Child colleagues for a couple songs. (I'd have liked to have heard more Destiny's Child, and could've done without Beyonce closing the show with the rather downbeat "Halo," but that's just me.) And for a brief time Tuesday, it looked like that might have been the last Super Bowl halftime show for a couple of years.

Next year's Super Bowl is being played at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, the first time the Super Bowl has ever been played in an outdoor stadium in a cold weather state. The *New York Post* reported Tuesday that it just may be too darn cold to mount one. It's a ton of work to immediately assemble, and then just as quickly disassemble, the stage, the lights, the fireworks, etc., for what are pretty extravagant halftime shows these days, and a source close to the planning of the show told the *Post* it might just be too cold to pull it off.

Not surprisingly, given how big of a deal the halftime show is, the story immediately gained traction, and was picked up by several different news outlets. By the time Tuesday night rolled around, the NFL had issued a statement, reassuring fans that there will indeed be a halftime show at MetLife in 2014.

Frankly, I'm not surprised the NFL refuted the *Post* report. Whether it's younger acts like Beyonce or the Black-Eyed Peas or older ones like Paul McCartney or the Rolling Stones, the Super Bowl halftime show is generally pretty entertaining, and is always a big draw. I wouldn't be surprised in the least to learn just as many people watch the Super Bowl these days for the commercials and the halftime show as they do for the game itself. So if it's cold, well, the behind-the-scenes folks will just have to suck it up, deal wit' it, and produce the halftime extravaganza. The show, to coin a phrase, must go on.

* * *

See you next week.

Obituaries

Portland

Philip J. Nanfito

Philip J. Nanfito, 83, of Portland, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 29, at Portland Care and Rehab. He was the son of the late Filadelfio and Rose (Mangiamello) Nanfito.



Born on Sept. 26, 1929 in New Britain, he moved to Portland in 1941 and was a graduate of Portland High School Class of 1949. He was a U.S. Army veteran having served from 1951 to 1953 with the rank of staff sergeant. He was a 52-year member of the Knights of Columbus Freestone Council 7, and he enjoyed boating, bowling and golf.

He leaves his nine godchildren, many nieces and nephews and he was predeceased by his many brothers and sisters.

Funeral services were held Saturday, Feb. 2, at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial was in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Saturday at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, prior to Mass.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Church of St. Mary 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

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

East Hampton

Caroline Turner

Caroline "Carrie" Turner of East Hampton passed away Sunday, Jan. 27, after a brief illness, at the age of 86. Carrie was born Aug. 27, 1926, the youngest daughter of Albert Hitriz and Katherine Krieger, who ran a dairy farm in Moodus.

She married Clifford Basil Turner of East Hampton in 1950, and moved to East Hampton where she remained for the rest of her life.

Carrie was an avid duckpin bowler in the 1950s and won several regional championships. She raised two sons, got her bachelor of education degree in 1964 from Eastern Connecticut State University, worked as a teacher's aid for special education in the East Hampton public school system, as the secretary of the East Hampton Congregational Church, and as an office manager at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. She was active in the Congregational Church as well as the public library and senior center in East Hampton.

Carrie's beloved husband passed away in 1996, but she is survived by her two sons, Richard of Nashua, N.H. and Boston, Mass., and Philip of East Hampton, as well as several grandchildren.

Although she outlived all of her immediate relatives and many of her friends, her remaining family and friends, and all who knew her, will miss her sharp intellect, sense of humor, and zest for life.

A memorial service for Carrie will be held Saturday, Feb. 9, at 2 p.m., at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Middlesex Hospice c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Andover

Susan E. Hemond

Susan E. (Turner) Hemond, 53, of Andover, formerly of Manchester, passed away Friday, Jan. 25, at St. Francis Hospital, after a short illness. She was born Jan. 27, 1959 in Hartford to the late David and Mary (Chaia) Turner.

She was a graduate of Manchester High School and received an associate's degree from Manchester Community College. She worked in the medical lab at Manchester Memorial Hospital until illness forced her to leave.

She was an avid horseman, who enjoyed providing riding lessons. Sue was very passionate about many animals, but it was her love of horses that led her to the love of her life and her soul mate, Jim.

Besides her husband Jim, Sue is survived by a sister Carol and her husband Bud Marino of East Hartford; a brother-in-law, Dennis Stratton of Ellington; a nephew, David Stratton of Vernon; a nephew, Carl Marino and his wife Jill and great-nephew Nicholas of South Windsor; two aunts, Catherine Mather of Manchester and Bea Chaia of South Windsor; and many cousins.

She was predeceased by a sister, Linda (Turner) Stratton.

Services will be private. Donations may be made to any animal shelter or charity of your choice.

Colchester

Therese F. Blais

Therese F. Blais, 85, of Colchester, widow of the late Donald F. Blais, passed away Sunday, Feb. 3. Born in Natick, R.I., on Dec. 12, 1927, she was the daughter of the late George and Lorea (Thuotte) Picard.

Therese was a graduate of Bryant College in Rhode Island. She and Donald were married in 1951 at St. Joseph Church in West Warwick, R.I., and together shared 21 years of marriage before he predeceased her on Nov. 7, 1972. After her husband's passing, while still raising her family, she began working as a teacher's aide at Halls Hill Elementary School in Colchester for many years before her retirement. Mrs. Blais was a faithful and longtime communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester.

Therese will be remembered most fondly by her family as a loving wife, mother, grandmother and devoted friend to all who knew her.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered by her four children and their spouses, Marc Blais of Colchester, Lori and Rodney Higgins of Colchester, David and Terry Blais of Fairfield, Maine, and Joanne and Steven Cohen of East Hampton; four grandchildren, Justine and Walker Higgins and Sarah and Evan Cohen; two brothers, George and his wife Muriel Picard of West Warwick, R.I. and Norman Picard of Warwick, R.I.; a brother-in-law, Raymond Blais of East Greenwich, R.I.; four sisters-in-law, Virginia Blais of North Kingstown, R.I., Cecile Blais of Coventry, R.I., Bernadette Blais of Warwick, R.I., and Jane Blais of Warwick, R.I.; and many cherished friends and extended family members.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by two brothers-in-law, Robert Blais and Senator Leo D. Blais; and a sister-in-law, Claire Picard.

Friends called Wednesday morning, Feb. 6, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The celebration of the funeral liturgy followed at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Graveside services were observed Thursday, Feb. 7, at the Elm Grove Cemetery, 954 Tower Hill Rd., North Kingston, R.I.

Donations in her memory may be made to the American Heart Association, 5 Brookside Dr., Wallingford, CT 06492.

Portland

William E. Dahlberg

William E. Dahlberg, 84, of Portland, husband of Anna (Mays) Dahlberg for 62 years, passed away Monday, Feb. 4, at home. Born June 24, 1928, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Carl Oscar Eugene and Marion C. (Birdsey) Dahlberg.

He worked for Pratt & Whitney for many years and he was a U.S. Marine Corps veteran having served during World War II. He was a member of the V.F.W. in East Hampton and the American Legion in Portland.

Besides his wife, he leaves two daughters, Christine Dahlberg of Portland and Barbara Perigny of Middletown; a sister, Marilyn Harris of Durham; two grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held today, Feb. 8, at 2 p.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, with the Rev. James Reemts officiating. Burial will be in the Swedish Cemetery, William Street, Portland. Relatives and friends may call today from 1 p.m. until the service at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Zion Lutheran Church 183 William St Portland, CT 06480.

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

Portland

John P. Kunsey

John P. Kunsey, 84, of Portland, husband of Gloria (Natalie) Kunsey, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 5, at Portland Care and Rehab. He was the son of the late Felix and Margaret (Barrett) Kunsey.

Born July 15, 1928, in Middletown, he spent most of his adult life in Portland. He was employed at Pratt & Whitney for 35 years until his retirement and was a U.S. Marine Corps veteran. In retirement he enjoyed making furniture and saltwater fishing rods. He was an avid hunter and fisherman and was a lifetime member of the Rhode Island Marine Sport Fishing Club. He spoke fondly of his annual fishing trips to Cape Cod with his dear friend, Ed Bransfield.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Stephen Kunsey and his wife, Elizabeth of West Hartford; a daughter, Paula Slym and her husband David of Portland; two grandchildren, Ian Kunsey and Amanda Rasch; and several nieces and nephews.

The family would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the staff of Portland Care and Rehabilitation, who showed such incredible kindness and compassion to John in his final days.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Feb. 9, at 11 a.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Relatives and friends may call Saturday from 9 a.m. until the service, at the funeral home.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 22718, Oklahoma City, OK 73123.

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

Portland

Dominic Limanni

Dominic Limanni of Portland passed away Saturday, Feb. 2, at Yale-New Haven Hospital, surrounded by his loving family. Born in Willimantic March 24, 1920, he was the son of the late Antonio and Francesca (Maiorana) Limanni.

Prior to his involvement in World War II, he worked as a tool and die maker for Colt Firearms, supporting the production of 20mm and 40mm guns. In 1943, he enlisted in the United States Navy, serving aboard the aircraft carrier USS Hornet (CV-12) in the Pacific combat zone, achieving the rank of Water Tender Third Class, and briefly on the USS Tarawa (CV-40).

After his honorable discharge in 1946, Dominic returned to tool and die making, working at Royal Typewriter in East Hartford for 23 years and Raymond Engineering in Middletown for three years. He ended his career at Chandler-Evans in West Hartford, retiring as a master machinist in 1984.

Mr. Limanni is survived by his three children: The Rev. Joseph Limanni, a Roman Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Texas; Maryanne Limanni Winslow, her husband Timothy and their son Robert of Virginia; and Nancy Crosen, her partner Bruce Poresky, and her children Kristin, Lauren, and Kevin Crosen of Portland; sister-in-law Gloria Limanni of Willimantic and brother-in-law Donald Cameron of Ledyard; as well as many nieces and nephews, and his beloved cat, Angelina.

He was predeceased by his wife of 56 years, Julia (Szczeny) in 2007; his brothers Joseph, Samuel and Frank Limanni; sisters-in-law Genevieve Cameron; Mary Connelli and her husband William; Gladys Shea and her husband Daniel; and brother-in-law Rudolph Szczeny.

Dominic's family will receive relatives and friends at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Monday, Feb. 11, from 9-10:30 a.m. Funeral services will follow at the Church of St. Mary at 11 a.m. for a Mass of Christian Burial. Interment will follow in St. Mary Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that gifts in Dominic's memory be sent to the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111.

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

Marlborough

Walter T. Gregory

Walter T. Gregory of Marlborough passed away peacefully in his home Friday, Jan. 30, at the age of 93. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Jean Pietras Gregory.

Originally from Colchester, Walter had a wealth of stories about his childhood in "Moonshine Alley," life at the "Lazy-U Ranch," and pumping soda and fixing burgers for the regulars at Gregory's Soda Fountain, his brother's longtime establishment in Colchester. His blend of Depression-era wisdom and mischievous humor made his memories into unforgettable family legends. While a student at Bacon Academy, he played basketball, and would become a big fan of Husky hoops.

Walter met his beautiful wife Jean at a dance at Lake Hayward. Shortly after their marriage, they moved to New York where he attended the RCA Institute and studied to be an electronics technician, getting into the very beginnings of the television and electronics explosion. He worked for many years at The Record Shop and The Stereo Shop in Hartford and finished his career with Allen Organ Studios. He traveled throughout the state making many friends as he maintained and repaired church organs, televisions and radios.

Walter especially enjoyed family gatherings and his hobbies included working in his vegetable garden, cooking amazing soups, trout fishing and sharing his love of rare words and wordplay. He had an artistic talent as well, creating some lovely oil paintings and playing many of his favorite standards on the piano – all by ear and all the right notes!

He was an active member of his community, from chairing the Board of Finance, to serving on the Parks and Recreation and Democratic Town Committees for many years. Later in life, he was a regular at the Marlborough Senior Center, where he was valued as a consummate pool player and a loyal friend.

Walter was predeceased by his parents, Paul and Malvina Gregory of Colchester (via Poland), and his siblings, Gus, Arthur, Edwin, John and Molly.

He is survived by his children and their families: son Jim Gregory, his wife Cynthia Coia and daughter Katherine; son John Gregory and his partner, Wanda Campbell; and daughter Betty Kolding, and her husband Hal and daughter Hayley.

His family and friends are forever grateful for the love Walter gave them and will always remember his sharp wit, dedication to his family and the pleasure he took in the world around him.

A memorial service will be held at noon Saturday, Feb. 9, at St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his honor to the Marlborough Senior Center, the Richmond Memorial Library or the Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Fund.

Arrangements are being handled by the Belmont Funeral Home, Colchester.

Colchester

Joan Frances Hibbert

Joan Frances (Blesso) Hibbert, 74, of Lake Hayward, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 6, at Apple Rehab in Colchester. Born Aug. 6, 1938, in Hartford, she was a daughter of the late Francis and Nellie (Chmura) Blesso.

Joan had worked as an office secretary for Hoffman Ford in East Hartford for many years before her retirement.

She will be most fondly remembered as a loving mother of two, Donald Hibbert of Lake Hayward and Cheryl-Anne Thumm and her husband Brian of Michigan; dotting grandmother of four, Dillon Hibbert, Stefani and Ashley Skorvanek and Victoria Thumm; special sister of two, John Blesso and Marjorie Erickson, both of California; and aunt, cousin and friend to many, all who she leaves behind.

A celebration of her life will be announced at a later date. Donations in her memory may be made to the Jake Shumbo Fund c/o Liberty Bank 219 South Main St., Colchester, CT 06415.

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

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

Colchester

Irene E. Perkowski

Irene E. Perkowski, 88, of Yantic, died at Harrington Court Healthcare in Colchester on Saturday, Feb. 2, after a long illness. She was born in Norwich on June 24, 1924 to the late Edgar and Margaret (Ryan) Belliveau.

On Jan. 26, 1946, she married her husband Henry P. Perkowski Sr. at Sacred Heart Church in Norwichtown. He predeceased Irene on Nov. 26, 1982.

Irene worked as an assembler at the former King Seely Thermos. She was a member of the Rosary Society at Sacred Heart Church in Norwichtown and was a life member of the ladies auxiliary at the Yantic Vol. Fire Co.

She is survived by her son, Henry P. Perkowski Jr., and his wife Judy; a brother, John Belliveau; grandchildren, Jodi Vara and Kimberly Perkowski; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her parents; husband; six brothers, Robert W., Thomas A., the Rev. Norbert E., Clarence, Edward, and Michael Belliveau; two sisters, Marie G. Oloff and Margaret LeBlanc; and one son, Paul J. Perkowski.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Sacred Heart Church in Norwichtown Tuesday, Feb. 5. Burial immediately followed at St. Joseph Cemetery in Norwich. Calling hours were held Monday, Feb. 4, at Labenski Funeral Home, 107 Boswell Ave., Norwich.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Sacred Heart Church, 52 W. Town St., Norwich, CT 06360.

To leave an online condolence, visit mem.com.

Marlborough

Erwin O. Jacques

Erwin O. Jacques, 88, a World War II veteran and 50-year resident of Marlborough, passed away Saturday, Jan. 26, at the Brian Health Center in Canton, Ga. The son of Grace and Arthur Jacques, Erwin was born in Detroit, Mich., and spent most of his youth in Tiverton, R.I.

He was predeceased by his wife of 38 years, Ruth Luther Jacques, his brother, Bernard and his daughter Nancy Kinghorn. He is survived by his daughter Susan Peterson of Holly Springs, Ga.; three nephews; six grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Erwin's commitment to his country, family, friends and work were evident throughout his life. He served his country during WWII stationed in Italy, maintained his membership in the Masons for 55 years, worked as a mill foreman for Taylor Lumber Company for 20 years, followed by a career at Phoenix Mutual Insurance Company retiring after 20 years.

A funeral service was held Monday, Feb. 4, at Rose Hill Funeral Home, 580 Elm St., Rocky Hill, followed by burial at Rose Hill Cemetery.

Portland

Nellie Bartosiak

Nellie Bartosiak, 88, wife of the late Leonard Bartosiak, passed away Thursday, Jan. 31. She was the daughter of the late Peter and Lucy (Tuccio) Augeri.

Born Aug. 18, 1924, in Portland, she was a life-long Middletown resident and a member of St. Mary of Czestochowa Church. Prior to retirement, Nellie was employed by the State of Connecticut – Department of Motor Vehicles.

She leaves a son, Ted Bartosiak of New Britain; beloved grandchildren, Elizabeth (Betsy) of New York City, Leanne of Portland, and their mother, Emily Bartosiak; as well as a sister, Eleanor Romboli and her husband Joseph of Durham.

She was predeceased by her daughter, Carol, sisters, Angie Hemmann, Mary Martin, Ann France and a brother Joseph Augeri. She also leaves many nieces, nephews, sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law.

Funeral services were privately held Wednesday, Feb. 6, at Biega Funeral Home in Middletown. There were no calling hours. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Mary of Czestochowa Church, 79 South Main St. Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Portland

Catherine Swank

Catherine (Rambo) Swank, 85, of Portland, beloved wife of the late Hugh William Swank, died Thursday, Jan. 31. Born in Lapel, Ind., a daughter of the late William and Mable (Hershberger) Swank, she had lived in many areas of the country before settling in Enfield when her husband retired in 1986.

Catherine is survived by two daughters and sons-in-law, Peggy and Richard Beaupre of Portland and Ann and Jay Steele of Plantsville; two brothers, George Rambo of Indiana and William Rambo of Virginia; and two granddaughters, Megan Steele and Michelle Barbuto.

She was predeceased by a brother, Oliver Rambo and a sister, Sara Kline.

The funeral service was held Monday, Feb. 4, at the Sheehan Hilborn Breen Funeral Home, 1084 New Britain Ave., West Hartford. Burial was in Hazardville Cemetery, Hazardville. There were no calling hours.

Online condolences may be made at sheehanhilbornbreen.com.