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East Hampton native and Portland High School alum Erin Brady is shown here after winning the Miss Connecticut crown in December. Bigger things awaited Brady, though, as on Sunday she took home the “Miss USA” title as well. She became the first Connecticut resident to win the national pageant in its 61-year history.

East Hampton Native Wins ‘Miss USA’ Crown

by Elizabeth Bowling

East Hampton native Erin Brady traded in her “Miss Connecticut” title for the Miss USA crown Sunday.

Brady is the first Miss Connecticut USA to be named Miss USA in the 61-year history of the pageant, and her family is very proud.

“We are all just so happy for her that she’s doing this,” Brady’s grandmother, Theresa Brady of East Hampton, said. “Our family has never had anything like this so this is great.”

The 25-year-old beauty queen is originally from East Hampton but graduated from Portland High School in 2005. Up until being named Miss USA, Brady worked as a senior accountant for Prudential Financial in Hartford and resided in South Glastonbury.

But for the next year, Brady will call New York City “home” because Donald Trump’s Miss USA organization set her up with an apartment in the Big Apple and assigned her the duty of bringing awareness to its official cause, breast and ovarian cancer.

Glastonbury resident Brooke Berlet, Brady’s friend and former co-worker, said, “Honestly, it was really amazing [that she won]. You couldn’t ask for a better woman to represent girls and women in the United States.”

Berlet said that Brady will harness her negative childhood experiences relating to substance abuse in her family and use them to be a positive example of strength and perseverance.

She’s already set an example to her younger sisters and “pretty much showed them the way,”

Berlet said.

“She’s always been the leader. She just had that quality about her,” Brady’s grandmother said. “She took the mother role when there were problems with the parents. She’s the one they look up to.”

Theresa Brady said her granddaughter wants to start a program in Connecticut for children with alcoholic parents.

Starting the program may prove to be a feat, but Brady is used to working hard. When she was in high school, Brady used to be a hostess at Max Amore in Glastonbury, where Berlet was a bartender.

Brady put herself through college – ultimately becoming the first person in her family to graduate from college, Berlet said. Brady graduated with honors from Central Connecticut State University, with a degree in finance.

Berlet remembers her friend working full time to pay for her education and studying during her breaks.

“She takes care of everything by herself,” Berlet said, and added, “She didn’t come from *Toddlers and Tiaras*.”

Rather, the Miss USA pageant was only the third pageant Brady had ever entered. After finishing runner-up in the Miss Connecticut pageant in 2012, she ran again in 2013 and won the title, which allowed her to compete in last weekend’s show. She simply put her mind to something and succeeded, typical of Brady,

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Portland High Class of 2013, Small and Special

by Elizabeth Bowling

With a thunderstorm booming in the hours leading up to the Portland High School Class of 2013 graduation, the intimate ceremony was moved indoors to the school’s auditorium Tuesday, June 18.

The rain came down relentlessly and PHS Principal Andrea Lavery joked to the full auditorium and those in the cafeteria watching on a big screen, “[moving the ceremony indoors] was a difficult call to make, but I think it was the right choice.”

The procession was led by a man playing the bagpipes, followed by school administration, followed by the graduates. The girls wore red caps and gowns and the boys wore black.

The small class, made up of 83 students, was a “close-knit” group, salutatorian Alexa Decina said.

“We are special,” Decina said. “I think half of it has to do with Portland and the other half is simply luck, and maybe our parents, that a group of students as driven as my classmates all ended up together.”

Decina will attend Duke University next year where she will study finance, but, she said while choking back tears, “I’ll always take a piece of Portland with me.”

Lavery said that for the 83 Portland gradu-

ates, the number “13” wasn’t so unlucky after all. Rather, the Class of 2013 proved to be exceptional.

Class president Michael Tammaro agreed that his class was truly exceptional. He spoke proudly about its success in fundraising, athletic distinctions and academic awards like the Governor’s Scholar Award. He was confident that his classmates would branch out from Portland and do great things throughout their lives, like serve in the armed forces or attend college across the country.

Valedictorian Adam Harris, who will attend Yale University next year and study chemistry, was confident in the future of his class, too.

“Tonight we celebrate not just the accomplishments of the past four years, but the many accomplishments that are still to come,” Harris said.

He thanked his classmates for being such a big part of his life through the words of Winston Churchill. He said, “Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”

Harris and Tammaro both commented on how small their class is, compared to other high schools.

“The size of our class is a conversation-
See Portland High Page 2



Laura Katherine Wall embraces her mother as classmates and Principal Andrea Lavery look on. Marcy Wall was called up to the stage to present her daughter with her diploma.



Salutatorian Alexa Decina, left, who will attend Duke University in the fall, gets choked up during her speech at Tuesday night's indoor graduation. She looked back fondly at the good times and laughs she shared with her classmates throughout the years. At right, the "close-knit" group of 83 graduates throw their caps in the air after receiving their diplomas in front of administrators, faculty, staff, family and friends.

Portland High cont. from Front Page

starter," Tamaro said. "This may be the first and only time you will attend a high school graduation where the entire senior class can fit on the same stage with the presenter."

Harris jokingly bragged that the PHS football team didn't lose a single game last season, but that's because PHS doesn't have a football team.

"It's tough to let go of a small class; it's like a family," graduate Katelynn Benoit said immediately following the hour-long ceremony. "I don't know what I feel. I'm going to Southern [Connecticut State University] for nursing so I'm excited about that."

Graduate Collin Dapkus reflected upon his time at PHS and said, "I'm glad the four years are done and I'm looking forward to the future."

Harris summed it up in his speech. "While our paths will, after tonight, begin to diverge,

all of our journeys will be bound by a common thread," he said. "Although we may someday forget the names or faces of some of our classmates, we will forever be touched by the lessons we have learned from each other."

Members of the Portland High School Class of 2013 are:

^Stephen Michael Agogliati, *#>^Rebekah Anderson, Devon Gabrielle Arce, ^Kyle Robert Armstrong, #^Aidan J. Bauer, ^Katelynn Michelle Benoit, Erin Helen Bials, #>^Nicholas Bruce Blanchard, *#>^Justin Earl Brown, Lukasz Mikolaj Burke, Benjamin K. Caisse, *#^Elizabeth Lauren Casserino, ^Michael Anthony Catanzaro, #^Steven Kyle Churchill, *#^Katie Lynn Coleman, Amber Converse, #^Maria D'Angelo, #^Justin Danielewicz, Megan Marie Danielewicz, Collin Michael Dapkus, *#>+^Alexa Decina, Mathew Peter

DeCrescenzo, Soleybe A. Diaz, *#>^Elizabeth Anne Dickerson, ^Jake Etienne, Alyssa T. Feldman, *#>^Erin Fitzpatrick, Joshua I. Fontanez, >Craig D. Fortin, Timothy Fraulino, ^Andrew H. Geres, Ian Christopher Gotta, Katherine Guliani, Nathaniel ^Joseph Hardesty, *#>+^Adam S. Harris, Kevin Michael Hoffman, #^Rebecca Claire Johnson, ^John Kelley III, #>Rachel E. Kostraba, #>^Evelyn Blake Law, Richard Le, Joshua H. Leary, #>^Brianna Marie Marconi, Ana Gabriela Marroquin, ^Liam Terrence McCarthy, Shaun McMiller, ^Owen Ian Mooney, Joshua Morehouse, *#^Sarah Veronica Nesci, ^Kelsey Evelyn Oakliff, #>^Daniel Joseph Onofrio, ^Tristan Santo Pantano, Dillon Michelle Pelotte, Abigail Elizabeth Perrotti, #Cassidy Nicole Phelps, #>^Alyssa Maya Phillips, ^Erica

Lynn Pititto, ^Cody Revicki, Casey A. Richer, ^John Rosano, Cassidy Rose, Rebecca Renee Rustek, #^Matthew W. Ryan, Trey Salvatore, >Noelle Katherine Sanders, Austin Paul Scrivano, #>^Philip A. Shattuck, ^Beau T. Sienkiewicz, Alexis Dorothy Steele, ^Michaela Susan Stokke, Nicholas Ryan Stokke, Jayquan T. Swain, #>^Michael R. Tamaro, Leonard A. Teape, Carl S. Thorell, >^Megan Rae Wache, #>^Paige Catherine Wache, Sacred Walden, #>Laura Katherine Wall, Gina Marie Waller, >Samantha Rene Weber, >Kaitlin Mary Wilson, #^Michele Lyn Ziegler.

*Top 10 percent of the class - Yellow Cords; #National Honor Society - White Cords; >Trim Music Honor Society - Pink Cords; +Valedictorian; ++Salutatorian; ^CAPT Mastery, all tests

Miss USA cont. from Front Page

Berlet said. Berlet said Brady has a "heart of gold," and is beautiful on both the outside and the inside.

Regarding a phone conversation the two friends had just a couple of hours before Sunday's pageant, Berlet said of the then-Miss Connecticut, "She wasn't nervous. She was ready to go and excited to have the opportunity to participate."

But she didn't just participate, of course; she competed and excelled. Arguably, her answer during the interview portion of the pageant solidified her win.

Asked if she agreed with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to allow DNA testing of suspects after an arrest, Brady said, "I would agree with this. I think if somebody is being prosecuted and has committed a crime that's that severe they should have a DNA test. I think there are so many crimes going on in this world, that if that is one step closer to figuring out who has done it, I think we should absolutely do so."

Brady's next pageant is the Miss Universe pageant in Moscow Nov. 9, the original date of her wedding to Tony Capasso.

According to her grandmother, Brady's wedding has now been postponed, until after the conclusion of her reign as Miss USA.

"Those plans are on hold," Theresa Brady said. "But her fiancé is right with her. He stands by her side. You can always be married but you can't always become Miss USA."

Aside from her 26-day stay in Russia for the Miss Universe pageant, Brady will keep busy with interviews, like the 13 she had in one day on Tuesday, her grandmother said, and a full schedule that, for now at least, can keep her up until 12:30 a.m. some nights, and wake her up again at 3 a.m.

"She's going to be a very busy girl," her grandmother said. "Right now everything is new."

But her hometown hasn't forgotten about her. Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield announced at Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting that June 19, 2013, was "Erin Brady Day" in Portland, and presented Brady, who was not in attendance, with a certificate for representing Connecticut and winning the Miss USA pageant on June 16.

The certificate, which was presented by the Portland Board of Selectmen, acknowledged Brady's hard work and achievements. Selectman Mark Finkelstein suggested also displaying a tribute banner across Main Street in honor of Brady - a roughly \$400 to \$500 effort.

"We're very proud of Erin and her accomplishments and proud to say she is a Portland High School graduate," Bransfield said.

The first selectwoman remembered when Brady ran on the high school track team.

"She was an accomplished athlete," she said. "She's a lovely person and certainly a very talented individual."



After being destroyed by a fire about one year ago, the Bevin Bell factory was forced to relocate. Pictured above is the building on Watrous Street, out of which the company is operating indefinitely.



This photo, taken Monday, shows some of the damage caused by the fire that ripped through the former Bevin Bell factory on Bevin Road about one year ago. The fire destroyed most of the facility and its equipment. The company dedicated this past year to rebuilding.

Bevin Bell Rising From the Ashes in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Bowling

It was a little over a year ago that East Hampton's historic Bevin Bell factory was destroyed in a fire. Now, after dedicating 12 months to rebuilding, Bevin Bros. Manufacturing Company owner Matt Bevin said the company is persevering, in an effort to bring "belief, hope and joy to people."

In the week following the May 27, 2012, fire, the company moved into a vacant building on Watrous Street and started the recovery process, in a place Bevin said is safe and secure and won't cause further damage to any recovered items.

The space needed a lot of work – rewiring, a new roof and new machinery. Bevin chalked it up to "dollars, time, energy and emotion."

The dyes, which are the "brains" of the bells, were the most important pieces to recover. Because if the brain could be refurbished then Bevin could build a new body around it, but he could never build a new brain, he said.

The dyes were "fused together, rusted and melted and welded," Bevin said. They could only be "pried apart by the Jaws of Life."

The dye recovery has been a slow process. The company is currently about halfway through recovering them, Bevin said.

"You gotta walk before you run," he said.

That's why his team used the recovered dyes to start building the bells that people wanted the most and by October Bevin started producing new bells. He focused on producing bells for the Salvation Army, a nonprofit organization that needed bells by Christmas. Now he is

making between 12 and 20 different bells, he said.

The Salvation Army wasn't the only organization that counted on Bevin bells. Bevin bells were also used by the New York Stock Exchange and during Bill Clinton's presidential inauguration. The company makes bells in different colors, shapes and sizes. It makes sleigh bells, hand bells, house bells and cowbells.

More locally, the Chatham Historical Society relies on the Bevin Bros. company to produce a cowbell each year, on which a different scene of the town is painted. The bells are then sold at an annual fundraiser to benefit the historical society's museum.

Chatham Historical Society President Sandy Doran said she is relieved the company can continue to do that.

"I think it's wonderful that he [Bevin] has begun to rebuild. It's great for the town," she said. "It's nice to see a company that started in 1832 still going strong today."

Bevin said approximately 80 percent of bell orders have been filled since the fire, but the company is still dealing with outstanding orders. The remaining 20 percent comes from orders made both before and after the fire. They are the bells that haven't been manufactured yet since the fire.

But with almost the entire old staff and some new employees on hand, Bevin said the orders should be filled soon – and Bevin is hopeful to be able to start manufacturing those not-yet-being-made bells soon too, as more dyes are

recovered.

"People are being patient," he said. "Our customers have been great."

Bevin said his company is striving to keep the bells in Belltown not only for his employees and customers, but also to inspire hope and call attention to small businesses everywhere, which are "hanging on by a thread."

But Bevin is confident the 181-year-old company will reach its 200th birthday under his leadership.

"When we're done we'll be better than ever," he said.

Mike Maniscalco, who became town manager after the factory fire, said the Bevin company played a huge role in shaping East Hampton, which at one time housed more than 30 different bell factories – leading to East Hampton's moniker of "Belltown, U.S.A."

"Matt is a quintessential example of manufacturing," Maniscalco said. "He's a reminder of where we've come from and where we're going and that manufacturing is still very important to our community."

William Bevin and his brothers, Chauncey and Abner, founded the Bevin Bros. bell factory in 1832. In 1868, they incorporated their brother Philo into Bevin Bros. Manufacturing Company. Since then the company was successfully run by six generations of Bevins, and is the only remaining company in the country that exclusively manufactures bells.

After the fire, the company created a website,

keepthebellsinbelltown.com, which has brought awareness, excitement and enthusiasm to the company from people from all over, Bevin said.

"It reengaged people with why bells even matter," Bevin said about the site.

Letters of encouragement streamed in from townspeople and strangers alike to make the rebuilding process "worth every bit," Bevin said.

The company used its website to create, promote and sell two new bells: "Survivor Bells" and "Phoenix Bells."

The Survivor Bells are those that were salvaged from the fire and fixed up for sales. Thousands of bells were saved, cleaned up and packaged and are being sold in perfect audio condition, Bevin said, though not all of them look brand new.

The Phoenix Bell, the company's anniversary bell, carries the message, "Onward and Upward" on the front with text on the back that reads, "Bevin Bros. Mfg. Co. Since 1832 with a short interruption on May 27, 2012."

The anniversary bell commemorates the spirit of Bevin employees and customers. It celebrates the company's post-fire perseverance and continuation.

Bevin said the company actually loses a little money on the \$10 Phoenix Bell, thanks to its "modest price" and \$2 shipping cost.

"We measure our success in more than just dollars and cents," Bevin said. "You can't put a price on hope."

Portland Selectmen OK Work on Park, BIS

by Elizabeth Bowling

More than 20 Portland residents packed the Portland Library's meeting room during Wednesday night's public hearing on improvements to the Brownstone Intermediate School and the Village District Park on Main Street – improvements that are part of a project that was unanimously approved by the Board of Selectmen.

The \$200,000 project will be funded through two means. First, LoCIP, the state's Local Capital Improvement Program, will provide \$50,000. Second, the town's fund balance will provide the remaining \$150,000, according to Director of Finance Tom Robinson.

The board approved the supplemental appropriation of \$150,000 from the General Fund balance.

The project calls for repaving, new catch basins, line painting and signage improvements at Brownstone Intermediate School. It also requires improvements to the Park on Main Street including repaving, overgrown tree and vegetation removal, new fencing and a new basketball court.

Sean Dwyer, director of Parks and Recreation, said, "Our number one goal has been...to

build a basketball court in town," he said. "We don't have one currently [that is regulation size]."

The court at Brownstone now has "severe crack lines all the way through," Dwyer said, adding that it's 80'x30', but a regulation court is 94'x50'.

Dwyer's proposed plan calls for one regulation-sized court with six hoops total to allow for sideways games, like in a gymnasium, he said.

Given the opportunity to comment, several residents spoke positively about moving forward with the project.

Gary Collins, who is involved in a basketball club for kids in grades five through eight, spoke on behalf of the club. He said youth sports play a big role in getting kids "prepared for life."

"This is really an opportunity and a great place for the community to come together," Collins said. "It really is important to the overall town."

Portland schools' indoor basketball courts are technically available for practice space, but "they're full all the time," First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said.

Sophia Macgillis, who has a 13-year-old son who plays AAU and travel basketball, said, "I applaud you for even bringing this subject to the table."

She said it's "frustrating" that her son doesn't have a public practice facility. She said improvements to the area would create a "safe haven" for children.

Bransfield said, "This has to happen as quickly as we can" because ideally, it should be done before school starts up again in the fall. Paving should be done the second week of August.

Last night's regular board meeting yielded a lot of public comment on proposed Main Street parking and "calming" in terms of traffic control.

Main Street has houses that range from single to six-family dwellings, Bransfield said. Parking is not enforced by the state, she said, so the town is looking into ways to make parking safe and practical for Main Street residents.

Regarding parking on Main Street, Bransfield said it's a matter of addressing safety and providing parking, but it would also provide some curb appeal.

"As you're driving along Main Street it's nice to see some green areas as well as some plants," Bransfield said.

No decisions or concrete proposals have been made regarding parking yet.

Traffic on Main Street also proved to be a hot issue to several townspeople. Betsy Smith, a Portland resident and member of the Board of Education, presented the board with a petition, signed by over 60 people, she said, that addressed speed limit enforcement on Main Street. The speed limit on the street is 35 miles per hour, dropping to 25 m.p.h. near the schools.

Smith also supplied statistics and suggestions, like adding crosswalks or flashing lights when approaching the school zones, to slow down speeding drivers.

"I don't think we need to wait for someone to get hurt, or worse than that, to make a change," resident John Decina added.

The issues will be addressed in future meetings.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be held Wednesday, July 17, at 7:30 p.m. at Portland Library.

Belltown's Brightest Say Goodbye

by Elizabeth Bowling

East Hampton High School's valedictorian and salutatorian are moving on together to the next chapter in their lives.

Valedictorian Emily Norton and salutatorian Bethany Levy are best friends. They spend time together "literally every day after school," Levy said. And their friendship won't end when they graduate because they're both attending the University of Connecticut in Storrs in the fall.

Norton, who will be in the honors and pre-medical programs, will double major in biology and chemistry. She hopes to someday enter the medical field and become a pediatrician or physician. Levy, also in the honors program, will major in biomedical engineering, and plans to enter that career field.

Their interest in math and science over other subjects is a result of their high school classes, they said.

"I think the good teachers we've had in math have definitely helped us," Norton said. "We had good science teachers, too, so they helped us become more focused on math and science rather than English."

They each said their favorite class was Algebra II, taught by their favorite teacher, Jarad Demick.

"We kind of formed a bond with Mr. Demick," Norton said. "He's a very unique person. He has a very different teaching style. He relates more to people our age."

"He expects a lot out of us," Levy added. Demick said he respects Norton and Levy and that it's "refreshing that they don't just swallow the information that's given to them and take it at face value." Rather, they are passionate about the things they learn; they get

excited, even frustrated, he said.

"They are exceptional students and great to have in class," Demick said.

Norton is a member of the math team, competes in United States Swimming, an extracurricular swimming program not affiliated with the school, and is treasurer of the National Honors Society. She plans to volunteer at a nearby soup kitchen this summer.

Levy is also a member of the math team and the National Honors Society. She is the treasurer of Interact Club, which focuses on community service, takes dance classes and works part-time for a law firm.

The two aren't competitive. They just work hard and really try to succeed in their academics, they said. That's what got them to the top of their 129-student graduating class.

They were happy they had a chance to get to know their fellow seniors during a field trip to Washington, D.C., in October because they got to "bond as a class," Norton said.

"It was just the seniors and we had a lot of freedom to do what we wanted to do while we were also together the whole time," she said. "So we got to know seniors we didn't necessarily know that well."

Neither of Belltown's top-ranking seniors have finished their graduation speeches yet, and they aren't quite sure what they're going to speak about tonight.

Despite their close friendship, Principal John Fidler said, "They are two unique individuals...They are free-spirited, in a way. They think for themselves." He described both students as "academically motivated and driven."

"They go above and beyond in what they do,"



Valedictorian Emily Norton, right, and salutatorian Bethany Levy are best friends and will both be in the University of Connecticut honors program next year in Storrs. Norton is set to study biology and chemistry and Levy will study biomedical engineering.

Fidler said regarding the hours the two put in after school during the week and on the weekends.

He said he looks forward to seeing what the future has in store for the bright pair.

The East Hampton High School Class of 2013 will graduate on Friday June 21 at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

Marlborough Phase II Sewer Project a Go

by Melissa Roberto

An overwhelming 113 Marlborough voters supported Phase II of the town's sewer project in Wednesday night's town meeting, confirming that construction on the east side of Lake Terramuggus will begin in July.

Wednesday night's vote was one that had been anticipated for months, since Town Planner Peter Hughes, the Water Pollution Control Authority Commission (WPCA), and the boards of selectmen and finance, held meetings, info sessions and public hearings since last fall to inform the town of what the project entails.

The town meeting was scheduled after the WPCA, boards of selectmen and finance agreed to move forward with the project with the \$1.01 million bid it received from Hubble Construction of Burlington. Wednesday's vote approved the town to borrow up to \$1.01 million to pay for the planning, acquisition and construction of the project.

Though 14 voters did oppose the project moving forward Wednesday night, the opposition did not have enough of an effect to make the vote a close one.

Phase II is proposed to pick up where Phase

I left off, at the intersection of Lakeridge and Cheney roads. The construction will continue down Cheney Road to the intersection of Park Road, and then up Beverly Lane. It would also hook up five houses on North Main Street to the sewer line that already exists from Phase I.

The project also includes a portion that the town is not responsible for paying: a sewer line extension to hook up the Marlborough Health Care Center (MHCC). In recent months, officials have deemed the MHCC in "dire straits" of hooking up to a system, as its paid hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to hire a company to manually pump its effluent since its two former systems failed.

Now that the project has been approved, officials said construction of the project is expected to begin in July and be completed in the late fall.

First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski presented a brief presentation on Phase II before the votes were cast on paper ballots. She shared the costs of the project to the public, stating that approval of the project would allow the town to borrow up to \$1,010,000, which cov-

ers the planning, acquisition and construction costs.

While she explained the town would enter into a short-term note when the project begins – for an undetermined amount of years – the town would then enter into a 20-year repayment period with a predicted 3.75 percent interest rate.

Gaudinski then showed voters two costs of the project for the 20-year repayment period: one cost without state funding, and another with state funding.

Without state funding, the 20-year repayment period is made up of an annual cost of \$74,300, which would be paid for by two separate entities: an annual payment of \$50,200, or 67.6 percent, which would be paid for by the users who are actually hooking up to the system, and the other is a cost of \$24,100, or 32.4 percent, which would be paid for through general taxes.

However, if the town does receive state funding, the cost to taxpayers would be eliminated altogether. Gaudinski showed that with state money, from the Clean Water Fund, the annual payment for users hooking up to the system

would drop from \$50,200 to \$46,651, and lower the taxpayers' contribution down to \$0.

Officials who have been a part of the planning and bidding process were pleased that Phase II has ultimately been deemed a go for the town.

WPCA member Bill Lardi described the feeling as "ecstatic" once he found out the project had passed. He also admitted that he didn't expect as many voters to come out, but was "glad" to see so many did.

Gaudinski had similar feelings. "I'm very excited," she said happily. "I think it's a positive step for the town. I'm pleased that it was a good turnout so the passage was a positive 'yes' vote and not just [determined] by a small number of people in the audience."

The selectwoman added that she's witnessed several people in town come together and work hard to make it a positive outcome and said "congratulations to everyone" in town for being a part of the decision that she mentioned earlier in the night would expand Marlborough's tax base and provide greater economic growth to Marlborough in the future.

Fatal Car Accident in East Hampton

A two-car crash in East Hampton last week claimed the life of a Colchester woman, East Hampton Police said.

The crash occurred at around 5:23 p.m. June 11. Paula Lemire, 63, of Colchester, was traveling in a Jeep Grand Cherokee westbound on Route 66, near the Marlborough line, and collided head-on with Thomas Novack, 23, of Mansfield, who was driving a Dodge pickup truck, police said.

Both drivers were transported to Hartford Hospital. Lemire had to be flown in by Lifestar.

Police are still investigating the crash.

Town, School to Share Hebron Business Manager?

by Geeta Schrayter

Town Manager Andy Tierney was present at the June 13 meeting of the Board of Education to discuss the possibility of combining and sharing the services of a business manager.

Tierney explained such a move could result in the hiring of a higher-caliber candidate since it would mean a better salary, and added it would provide more checks and balances.

The town has been looking to hire a finance director to replace Lisa Hancock, who resigned from the position in January 2012. (Since then, Elaine Griffin has been acting as interim finance director.) In her letter of resignation, Hancock said she was leaving to become finance director in Tolland and mentioned the salary increase – from \$85,000 a year to \$100,000 – was something she couldn't pass up.

Tierney explained in the current search, the salary the town offers – the same \$85,000 annual salary Hancock was receiving – has prevented a new director from being hired, too. He said the position had been advertised, and a candidate was selected but the offered salary “was not advantageous for them” so they didn't take the offer.

There was “no fit” with the second and third candidates either, he said.

Tierney said now that the school board was looking to hire a new finance director as well, it was the appropriate time to talk about the possibility of combining the positions. Tierney explained that the town and school board had planned to discuss merging the two positions upon the eventual retirement of the school board's finance director, William Mazzara.

However, in May, Mazzara, who had been responsible for the finances of both the RHAM and Hebron school systems since 1994, resigned amid a scandal involving former Hebron schools superintendent Ellie Cruz's alleged misuse of funds. Mazzara was considered a RHAM employee, but his services were con-

tracted out to Hebron two days a week.

Despite the scandal and subsequent audit that revealed glaring holes in the school board's financial procedures under Mazzara, Tierney stressed the town wasn't looking to take over control of the school district, and the various responsibilities would be worked out. He said the boards of selectmen and finance knew the discussion was taking but his presentation was “very preliminary.”

Moving forward, Tierney said he'd like to bring in an expert to talk about the option more in depth, and he provided the board with an informational packet to look over. Included in the packet was a feasibility study conducted in another town that has a shared business manager. If the school was interested, Tierney said a similar study could be conducted in Hebron.

“I'm hoping you will consider this,” he said. “At least give it an unbiased look.”

If everyone was in favor of the merge, Tierney said the idea was to have someone in place by December or January, in time for the start of the next budget season.

Board member Amy Lynch-Gracias inquired if the merger would allow for fewer employees on the administrative staffs of both the Board of Education and the town, but Tierney said he didn't see it as being less people but more a matter of “people doing a more serious job.”

He added the merge would speak to those residents who feel the town and school board have a “top-heavy administration.”

“I'm not trying to force [the merge] but I think we owe it to the town to look at it seriously,” he stated.

Board member Will Moorcroft said it was “worthwhile” to have a conversation about combining the positions and figure out what the cost and benefits would be.

“It's worth a conversation,” he said. “I sup-

port having the conversation and exploring it further.”

Board of Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea then suggested that exploration be delegated to the resource committee.

Moorcroft agreed, calling that “the best way” to gather information. He said the committee wouldn't make any decisions but could explore the option and gather information which would then be brought back to the entire board.

* * *

Also at the meeting, the board officially accepted the resignation of acting superintendent Kathy Veronesi. Veronesi, who has been acting superintendent since December and was principal of Gilead Hill School prior to that, said although she had been offered the option to return to her position as principal now that a permanent superintendent had been hired, she had chosen not to.

Veronesi said her time in Hebron had been “richly rewarding” and the district has had “such tremendous success and so many reasons to celebrate.”

Tears fell as she thanked the district for an experience that changed her life.

“I've been changed for good,” she said.

“It is with sincere and deep regret that I accept your resignation, Kathy,” said Shea. “You've been an outstanding employee, a wonderful leader and an excellent administrator. We were lucky – very lucky – to get you and you've turned Gilead Hill School around.”

Shea's daughter, Katie Shea, was present at the meeting and gave Veronesi a note she'd written to read aloud. In the note, she thanked Veronesi for all she'd done and said she would never forget how Veronesi managed to remember the name of every student she'd had, nor how she'd gotten the students to read books for Dr. Seuss' birthday by promising to kiss a pig

– and holding true to that promise – if a certain threshold was met.

Moorcroft thanked Veronesi as well, and said his son reminded him of the pig kissing incident earlier that day.

“So you hit a home run that way, along with many other things, so thank you very much,” he said.

“There are kids who tell me they remember [my kissing the pig] and they hadn't been born yet,” Veronesi laughed.

(She later added good-humoredly “for the record” that her tenure involved more than livestock kissing “just incase” any other districts happened to be watching the meeting's live stream.)

School board member Dominic Marino applauded Veronesi as well, and said she “really set the tone for the school.”

“My four children came through here and they had a great experience because of the learning environment and caring and socializing [provided that] children need,” he said. “Your legacy will be enduring.”

Lynch-Gracias also praised Veronesi and thanked her for her encouragement and understanding.

“I've had a lot of people tell me how much they appreciated you and the change you made here in the town, in the school, in their children,” she said.

Veronesi's resignation is effective June 30. However, Shea explained this week the board had authorized her to negotiate a contract to employ Veronesi as an education consultant for up to 10 days in July to help with the transition to a new superintendent.

* * *

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 27 at 7 p.m. in the Gilead Hill School music room.

Concerns Expressed Over RHAM Athletic Fields

by Geeta Schrayter

Athletic fields were the topic du jour at Monday's RHAM Board of Education meeting, as over a dozen residents were present to express their concerns over the fields' condition.

During the public comment portion of the June 17 meeting, resident after resident spoke about the fields and their desire for an artificial turf field. Pam Fromme, president of RHAM Sports Boosters, a self-proclaimed group of sports enthusiasts who work to enhance the athletic programs at the school, said she's expressed concerns about the fields with the board for the last five years and called the fields at the middle school “embarrassing.”

She added there aren't enough practice fields and as a result, the fields are overused. A turf field, she said, “is the way to go” since it would last longer and require less upkeep.

Hebron resident Crandall Yopp, who said he's coached in town for years, said the student athletes, other coaches and he are getting discouraged. Yopp said he wanted to work with the board to get the necessary manpower to make some field improvements, and said the improvements need to be a “priority.”

Input was given by Hebron Youth Baseball president Steve Turco as well. He said he receives a lot of feedback stating the fields at the school are “in disrepair” while the town fields are in “phenomenal” shape. Students, he furthered, wondered why they played on good fields in town when they were younger then moved on to “horrible” fields at the schools.

But on Wednesday, Board of Education Chairwoman Laura Steiner said she doesn't think the town fields take “quite the beating” the school fields do, which partially explained

their different states.

RHAM High School student Colin Fitzgerald felt similarly. At the meeting, he said younger kids play on the town fields, while young men play on the school fields.

“To compare fields is not fair,” he said.

In addition, Fitzgerald said he's played on worse fields than RHAM, but added there were students who would be willing to work on some improvements.

Steiner added Wednesday that the board has made attempts to put things in the budget to help the situation – like money for a field maintenance person – but they've been turned down.

The board has “kind of been aware of the [field] conditions for a while and tried to get some things in the budget,” she said. “And then the budget hasn't passed with these things and we had to cut them.”

Steiner said it was good the community was finally showing more of an interest in the fields and said they're going in a “positive direction.”

“We are working together with the public and the field committee and I think it's going very well actually,” she said, while noting some people still get angry over the lack of improvements. “I know it's their tax dollars,” she stated. “We are working with them – but we had to cut back; if money wasn't an issue, none of this would be an issue.”

Along with residents and coaches, some familiar faces from other board meetings spoke up at the meeting. Hebron Board of Selectmen member Gayle Mulligan said she understood the budget constraints RHAM is under, but she wanted to see a maintenance person put back in the budget to help with field improvements. She added, however, that a budget with such

additions won't pass if residents don't vote.

Marlborough selectman Dick Shea said he understands how difficult it is to get a budget passed, and noted the RHAM budget is usually defeated in Hebron (that was the case this year, as the budget failed in Hebron by a 597-553 vote but passed overall due to the votes in Andover and Marlborough). He said if RHAM had gone to referendum with a budget that included funding for fields, “it never would have passed.”

On Wednesday, RHAM Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski made that same point. Although he said he thought a turf field was a good idea, “I think the thing that I'm concerned about with the turf field is the price,” he said.

“One of the interesting things about some of the people who were proponents of what's going on,” – many of whom live in Hebron where the budget was defeated – he furthered, “is when they were asked if they voted in the referendum they said ‘no.’”

Like Mulligan, Siminski said people needed to vote for what they want.

“If people want those things in the budget they need to get out and support them when they're included,” he said.

* * *

In addition to field talk, Siminski also discussed the results of a financial audit that was performed at the school and the reorganization of the central office. Siminski explained the audit – which was the second one performed this year and requested in response to the investigation into the finances of former Hebron superintendent Ellie Cruz and RHAM's then-business manager Will Mazzara – showed there

were no unusual findings.

“I'm proud to say in the audit report there were no findings,” he said. “I'm very proud of that.”

Siminski said he thought the second audit was necessary “so that we can move forward and for full disclosure.” He added along with the audit, an accountant was asked to devise a plan for the “appropriate separation of duties” in the office.

He explained the district was looking to spread out the duties among the administrative assistant, senior accountant, accounting assistant, accounting clerk, the department head in the main office and the superintendent. Siminski said the idea was to separate the duties and hire a consultant to address the separation “for the same amount of money that was in the budget for the business manager” which amounts to about \$55,000.

“That's the overall task,” he said.

* * *

Also at the meeting, the board unanimously approved a salary raise for non-represented employees, a raise that Siminski said “varied.” Some received a 1.5 percent raise, and Siminski said the board is going to look at the other salaries “and adjust” the raise accordingly.

Non-represented employees include the bookkeeper, network administrator, director of maintenance, nurses and any other employees who don't belong to a union.

* * *

The next RHAM Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, Aug. 19, at 6:30 p.m., in the RHAM High School music room, 85 Wall St., Hebron.

Spirited CES Principal Retires

by **Melissa Roberto**

A part of Colchester Elementary School's spirit – and many would say a piece of its heart – will leave the pre-k through second grade school next Monday afternoon, as Principal Jacqueline "Jackie" Somberg will retire from her administrative career from the very school she helped create.

Before entering the Colchester school system in 2001, Somberg was a school psychologist for 25 years in multiple districts starting in Bristol and ending in Glastonbury – a role that made her a natural at helping others, especially students, within a school climate. She then took her first administrative role in 2000, when she was hired as the assistant principal of Hebron Avenue School in Glastonbury, which she held for one year before coming to Colchester.

For the last 12 years, Somberg has held the title of principal in elementary schools in town, where she motivated, cared for and inspired young Colchester students, many of her colleagues said.

Her first start as a principal in Colchester began in 2001 at the elementary school that has since turned into an intermediate school, the former Jack Jackter Elementary School (JJES), which then housed kindergarten through third grades and now houses Colchester's third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students.

In the first six years as a principal, Somberg had a unique experience – largely due to the fact that she not only led JJES but also because she witnessed the planning and building of the Colchester Elementary School, which stands today at 315 Halls Hill Rd.

When looking back at the elementary school's transition earlier this week, Somberg admitted she wore a variety of hats – sometimes literally wearing a hard hat as CES was being built.

When CES was being built, Somberg was often a part of many big decisions for both schools, since the third grade she had helped overlook would not be following her to the new CES. These decisions included making sure both schools were equipped with appropriate library books and support staff, down to communicating with architects and decorators, making sure educational specifications were being followed while CES was constructed, and choosing the carpet that still exists at the elementary school today.

With the transition complete in September

2006, Somberg recalled the first stages at the new, pre-k through second grade school, which included defining what CES was all about. The first thing she helped champion alongside faculty and students was determining what the school's mascot would be – a choice that was ultimately left up to the kids.

"What better way than to have the kids have a say?" she asked.

The product was the CES "Caring Cardinals," which determined that the school's colors would be red and white and the cardinal mascot's name would be "CC." Along with CC came the school's slogan: "Soar to Success at CES, a school that C-A-R-E-S."

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said he's had the pleasure of getting to know Somberg over the years, and that she's one of the reasons CES is a success.

"She made CES," he said. "CES is known as the caring community and that's really what Jackie has been all about."

Over the last 12 years watching over Colchester's youngest citizens, Somberg recalled the many accomplishments CES has reached. For starters, in 2010, CES was declared a PBIS – or a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports – school, which was declared by the state Department of Education.

"That's a way of looking at all the school has in place to support children's progress both academically and behaviorally," she explained. "We became a model for the state."

The retiree also looked back at some of her fondest memories at the school that were made possible through her partnership with her administration team and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

Somberg recalled the PTO hosting "stellar" events each school year including movie nights, pajama nights, inviting guest authors, and kindergarten story times – all events she's attended for the last 12 years.

She added that a special annual event that could bring tears to her eyes is the annual Veterans Day celebration she's helped plan.

Another event she helped champion was the annual Meet and Greet at the school, when students are able to come the day before the first day of the school year to meet their teachers, eat ice cream and take part in an activity sponsored by the PTO.

By doing all of these things, Somberg said she believes CES has grown "more and more"



Colchester Elementary School Principal Jacqueline "Jackie" Somberg is retiring, after 12 years with the school system.

in partnership with the Colchester community.

But she stressed that she enjoyed all of these memories at the school not only because they provided exciting opportunities for the kids, but also because it gave her a chance to be a collaborator.

"The opportunity to work in partnership is far more important to me than being an originator of an idea," she said.

While the number of days left in her CES office are few, Somberg said she hopes she's remembered as an administrator who always strived to "make decisions that were in the best interests of the kids."

Asked what she enjoyed about being an administrator, her answer was conclusive: "everything."

But the aspect of her job that she said she'll miss the most is something that she did not need to give any thought to, it was simple, "the kids."

"They love life, they're filled with life, they supply hugs and 'good morning's' and they are

so enthusiastic to learn," she said of her students. "It's catching."

Though she said her last day on Monday will be bittersweet, the veteran principal, and the school's "Dr. Seuss," will leave knowing that her kids are destined to succeed, especially because of something that was passed this year that she's been passionate about since day one: implementing full-day kindergarten for all in the district, which will begin in the fall.

Superintendent Mathieu recalled Somberg coming up to him on his first day as superintendent with ideas to make that possible.

"That was her lifelong dream," said Mathieu. "For her to leave this year and that's being instituted, that's a credit to her internship."

Though retirement awaits, Somberg says she'll begin traveling and do "a lot" of reading. And while she admitted she doesn't know what else is in store for her, she "absolutely" plans to come back and pay the district a visit.

East Hampton Police News

6/8: Jordan Parsons, 24, of 50 Old West High St., turned himself in pursuant to an active PRAWN (Paperless Arrest Warrant), East Hampton Police said, and was charged with failure to respond to an infraction.

6/8: Ralph Stone Jr., 56, of 15 Barbara Ave., was taken into custody based on an active PRAWN (Paperless Arrest Warrant), police said, and was charged with violation of probation.

6/9: Ashley Surowiecki, 28, of 3 Helena Dr., Cromwell, was charged with failure to drive right and DUI, police said.

6/10: Joshua L. Hurley, 23, of 7 Navajo Tr., was charged with fraudulent use of ATM, sixth-degree larceny and third-degree forgery stemming from a November 2012 incident, police said.

Hebron Police News

6/11: State Police said Dawinder Singh, 33, of 104 Wellwood Rd., Apt. B3, was charged with reckless driving, DUI, failure to drive in the proper lane and operating a motor vehicle in violation of license classification.

6/16: State Police said Travis Therrien, 27, of 43 Redding St., Floor 3, Hartford, was charged with DUI.

Marlborough Police News

6/16: State Police said Matthew Brown, 20, of 22 Wood Acres Rd., was charged with DUI and failure to drive right.

Colchester Police News

6/12: Colchester Police said a resident of Pinebrook Road reported that criminal mischief occurred at his home in the early morning hours. Colchester Police are currently investigating the case.

6/12: Colchester Police said Donald P. Brown, 47, of 180 Norwood Ave., New London, turned himself in on an active arrest warrant for risk of injury to a child, disorderly conduct, third-degree assault and third-degree strangulation.

6/13: Colchester Police said a resident of Old Hebron Road reported that her wedding rings were stolen from her residence. The case is still

under investigation.

6/16: Colchester Police said a juvenile was arrested for third-degree criminal mischief and disorderly conduct on Birch Circle.

6/16: Colchester Police said Mark Tigno, 43, of 20 Scott Circle, East Hartford, was charged with DUI, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, improper use of marker, failure to display plates and failure to meet minimum insurance requirements.

6/17: State Police said Amber Cromeens, 29, of 25 Victoria Drive, charged with three counts of sixth-degree larceny and two counts of first-degree failure to appear.

Ambruso Ends School Year as Permanent Principal in Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

Come Monday, Bacon Academy students will have officially finished another year of high school, and some will put on their caps and gowns later that day. But as the school year wraps up with goodbyes, Mark Ambruso is just beginning his new journey at the school, as its permanent principal.

Appointed as interim principal of Bacon Academy last July after former principal Jeffrey Mathieu replaced Karen Loiselle as the district's superintendent, Ambruso said he knew the 2012-13 school year would be a "year-long interview" to determine whether his position would turn permanent, and now he says he's already started to embrace his permanent role, which was formally agreed upon by the Board of Education in its April 9 meeting.

Ambruso first became acclimated with the Colchester district in 2001, when he was hired as one of the school's football coaches – which he did for four years, three of which he served as the head coach.

In November 2008, however, Ambruso took his first steps into Bacon Academy – and his career – as an administrator. Entering into the Colchester district with a total of 13 years as a high school football coach and 10 years as a high school teacher at Norwich Free Academy, Ambruso was practically a veteran when it came to interacting with high school students but admitted becoming an administrator was something he "never" intended on – that is, until the assistant principal position opened up at Bacon.

"I took a chance and they took a chance on me," he said.

As Bacon's assistant principal for four years, Ambruso said he spent much time disciplining students, but his transition to interim principal was one he said brought more differences than he originally anticipated.

"This year I had more personnel issues to deal with. I had a little more interaction with faculty and staff."

Already a few months into his permanent position, Ambruso said his goal for the upcoming year is to maintain something he feels he accomplished over the last: maintaining a "positive school climate."

To do that, Ambruso said he doesn't plan to change his interaction with students.

"I'm not an administrator who just sits at my

desk all day," he explained. Instead, he said he's tried to become a face familiar to students by attending lunches, sporting events and getting to know the students personally on a first-name basis.

"That's kind of why I went into education," Ambruso continued. "No matter what role I'm in I don't want to lose that interaction."

Though he described his entrance into the district as a "whirlwind," Ambruso said he's always been thankful that his predecessors left Bacon Academy in a "very good place" before he came along.

"I could not have worked and still work for better people," Ambruso said of the former superintendent Loiselle and the current one, Mathieu.

"We share the same vision, care about kids and the two of them have always done things the right way," he furthered.

And he applied those same feelings to the Board of Education.

"[The members] are amazing, they listen, they're supportive, and like [Mathieu], their best interest is in the minds of the kids," Ambruso said.

Throughout his year as interim principal, Ambruso piloted some changes at the school. With the help of other administrators, he said the upcoming school year will consist of a "flex period" that will take place every other Friday morning – a 30-minute period at the start of the school day for faculty and staff to work together to implement the future state mandates of teacher evaluations, the Common Core, and NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) requirements that need to be completed in the next four years.

"It's kind of a win-win," he said of the flex period. "It doesn't hurt student contact time but does offer teachers time to collaborate."

When Monday rolls around, Ambruso will bid farewell to the students he's helped lead for the past year. But starting Tuesday and continuing throughout the sunny months ahead, he'll continue what he's already started: a "tremendous" amount of duties to prepare for the upcoming school year. Those duties include working with the administration team to revise the student and faculty handbooks, plan the upcoming year's schedule, as well as hire new teachers at the school.

And he's already figured out what needs to



Bacon Academy Principal Mark Ambruso sits at the desk he's sat in all year, first as interim principal and now as the permanent one. Ambruso's position was made permanent in a Board of Education meeting on April 9.

be accomplished during the 2013-14 school year. He said he'll work with the administration team to accomplish things for the 10-year NEASC evaluation by rewriting the school's mission statement and creating a school-wide rubric that assesses all students.

He's also excited for a new change at the school he pushed for during the development of the 2013-14 budget: a building with complete wireless internet access.

Now that Ambruso is locked in as the high school's principal, Mathieu said he was "ecstatic."

"He's one of the most student-centered administrators that I've ever had the pleasure of working with," Mathieu said.

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein also spoke highly of Ambruso's leadership at the school.

"He has been an exceptional leader for Bacon Academy," Goldstein said of both Ambruso's role as assistant principal and principal. "He has done a lot towards the overall culture of the school as a great place for learning, athletic accomplishments, co-curricular accomplishments – really the whole gamut."

While the school year will wrap up soon, Ambruso summed up his response to officially becoming the school's principal as "extremely proud" – of the school, its staff and of course, he said, the students.

"When I look at many of the students and the relationships I have with them, I want my children to grow up and be just like these kids," he said. "They're responsive to the community, they're caring, they're compassionate and they have high academic aspirations."

"It's just a great place."

Bacon Retiree Publishes Book About the School

by Melissa Roberto

The familiar presence of Bacon Academy English teacher John Stanizzi will be sorely missed by the Bacon community once he retires next Monday – but his life lessons will live on by the legacy he leaves at the school, within students' minds, and even on bookshelves.

Wrapping up 21 years at the school, Stanizzi admitted his retirement from high school teaching has come at a coincidental time in his life: within the same month his fifth book is available to the public, a book that is made up of poems all about his teaching experiences at Bacon Academy.

With just one glance at the book, it's obvious that a teacher wrote it. Titled *After the Bell*, the cover shows a picture of a Bacon Academy hallway – a hallway Stanizzi spent 21 years walking down greeting his students and fellow staff members.

Published by Big Table Publishers of Boston, Mass., Stanizzi said the book provides readers a "realistic view of a high school teacher," that is full of the very experiences he's endured while working at the school.

"Sometimes they're really, really sad, sometimes they're hysterically funny, and sometimes it's both," he said of the content of the poems.

The experiences within the poems date back to the early '90s, and Stanizzi summed up all the memories he brings back to life as "the most powerful memories, that's for sure."

He began writing the poems in 2005. Though a busy man who's managed to teach high school, become a published poet and teach English at Manchester Community College, Stanizzi said writing poems about Bacon was

something that just came naturally.

"I just did what I do and the poems were presented to me," he recalled of his days spent at the high school. "I wasn't really looking for them."

Some of the more serious poems in the book bring back memories he said will stick with him – and probably many other Bacon Academy teachers – forever. One is about 20 of his students who lost their lives throughout his 21 years at the school.

Yet other poems in the book are just downright hilarious, he admits, like the poem that is made up of things mothers say – humorous quotes his students shared with him over the years.

Though the experiences are real, and very vivid, Stanizzi assured that, in most cases, his poems don't reveal any students' names.

While just looking at the book puts a smile on his face, Stanizzi said he hopes it gives readers a look inside of a high school teacher's mind, while also dispelling the myths that often give high school students a bad rap.

"That they're scary or that they're tough or that they're all making bad decisions," he said of the myths he hopes to prove false. "Those are just broad generalizations. Most high school kids I know are phenomenal people."

While his connection to high school students is one he says is driven by "pure love," what's also coincidental about the 64-year-old teacher is that his students and colleagues expressed the same feelings about him.

"If it weren't for Mr. Stanizzi I would not be graduating [next Monday,]" senior James Tasker said. "He is an amazing man and de-

serves all the credit in the world. He is an inspiration and has shown me that the sky is the limit."

Several of Stanizzi's colleagues mentioned how much he honors "every" kid no matter their strengths or weaknesses.

Current Bacon teacher David Williams – whose room has been next to Stanizzi's for 21 years – said kids who don't even particularly enjoy school have responded to Stanizzi.

"In the classroom he had to be demanding, understanding, endlessly patient, relentlessly encouraging, flexible, tenacious, inexhaustible, able to find humor in the absurd, and loving," Williams summed up.

Williams added that former Bacon English teacher Carole Shores once said, "He saves lives, I'm sure of that."

Earlier this week, when Stanizzi looked around Room 3123 – where he spent all of his 21 years – he admitted it's made up of memories. A quick scan of the room will show his former students' artwork, as well as props from his days as the Bacon Academy theater director – a title he held for 15 years.

But something even more remarkable is that the furniture and boards within Room 3123 are heavily detailed with signatures of his students dating back to 1994.

Thinking about his high school teaching days coming to an end in a few short days, Stanizzi let out a big sigh. The one thing he says he'll miss the most was an answer he let out almost immediately: "the kids, the kids, the kids."

Stanizzi's choice to retire didn't come from having too much to do in so little time (though

many questioned how he's done it all); he said it's because he often worried that his afternoon students weren't receiving the same level of energy and patience as his morning students received from him so he wanted to finish strong before he started "getting tired."

Stanizzi will continue life in his Coventry home, writing poetry, publishing it, and teaching at MCC. He'll also continue to run writing workshops at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington. He also hopes to finish his current creation, a book of poems based on Bob Marley lyrics that are connected to the Bible, with a heavy amount of Stanizzi's experiences in it too.

As he'll walk out of Bacon Academy for the last time on Monday, he can't help but remember how he got there in the first place. After quitting his former job at Aetna and his days of collecting unemployment were up, his wife, Carol, made him apply for the job. On his first day, he remembers crying on his way into the school because he "just didn't want to be there." By the end of September during his first year at Bacon, he knew he loved it and as he sat in his room earlier this week, he said that love won't fade.

Though he ends his years as a high school teacher with a feeling he said is "absolutely" bittersweet, the veteran teacher is happy knowing he's left a gift to his students and co-workers that is actually tangible, among the many intangible memories he'll take away.

To purchase your own copy of *After the Bell*, readers can go to amazon.com, email Stanizzi at jnc4251@aol.com, or contact Big Table Publishers of Boston.

Sisters Named Top Two in Bacon Academy Senior Class

by Melissa Roberto

For twins Megan and Shannon Ganley, hardworking is a trait the two have in common – among several other things, of course – as the sisters have earned the titles of valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, for Bacon Academy's 2013 graduating class.

Besides sharing genes, friends and even a seat on the school bus growing up, the Ganley sisters have grown and learned together throughout their lives, and their conscientious and hardworking attitudes have served them well.

Both with GPAs over 4.5, Megan and Shannon have managed to balance their busy lifestyles that consist of extra-curricular activities and volunteer work atop many hours spent studying to graduate from high school as the top two in their senior class – just one more milestone the two reached together.

And the sisters agreed working together rather than against each other is what helped them get to where they are today.

"I think it was more supporting each other than competing with each other that helped us to succeed," said Shannon.

"We definitely motivated each other," Megan added. "We always encouraged each other to work harder but not necessarily trying to do better than each other."

At Bacon Academy, the twins were often seen together. They were in the same group of friends, and sitting next to each other in class became a second nature over the years. They were each enrolled in nine AP, or advanced placement, classes during high school, four of which they were enrolled in together their senior year – what their mom Cindy Ganley Gladu said were reasons her daughters spent "every single day" studying for "hours and hours."

"They have an outstanding work ethic," their proud mom continued. "It's something they've worked hard for."

And the two will continue to do what they did throughout high school – to work hard – at college in the fall.

The big questions on everyone's minds, though, was if the two will go to college together, but they said the next four years will be spent apart – a first "significant" time of separation for the pair, Shannon said.

Valedictorian Megan will attend Boston College come September, in the college's honors program, and salutatorian Shannon will head to Worcester, Mass., to study at the College of the Holy Cross. The sisters will both enter into their freshman years with undecided majors, which in part, they said, is due to their senior AP literature and composition class

taught by Elizabeth Simison – one of their "favorite" high school teachers.

"I've always kind of tended toward math and science but I really did enjoy English this year," said Shannon. "It really stuck out in my mind as one of my favorite classes of high school."

Megan agreed. She said Simison's class had been quite influential, giving her a chance to delve deeper into writing and analyzing texts than she ever had before.

Simison, who the two spoke highly of, was just as grateful this year to teach the "two independent, young women," she said.

At first, Simison admitted she asked their previous teachers before the school year even started how she'd be able to tell them apart. Another teacher, Garrett Dukette, pointed out that Shannon had "the flower on her glasses."

"What I learned the first week of school was that sometimes neither Ganley wore their glasses, so I had to get to know their physical and intellectual differences more quickly than I might have otherwise," she said.

She classified the two as people who are "a product of their choices," which she believes have served them well thus far. But more than their smarts, Simison pointed out that the two have also "managed to live their lives."

"Yes, they are extraordinary human beings who have incredible lives ahead of them," Simison said. "But they are also two individual, tweeting teenage girls with whom I had the opportunity to share my knowledge and love of literature."

Though their college years will mark a new chapter in their lives, the twins say the 45-minute commute between Boston and Worcester means they will "definitely" be visiting each other.

Even outside of studying, Megan and Shannon remained side by side in their extracurriculars. For 14 years, the two have danced at Doreen's Dance Center in Colchester, and since fourth grade, the two have also performed alongside each other in band – with Megan playing the flute and Shannon the clarinet.

The sisters also dabbled in Bacon Academy after school programs together. They participated in the STEM Club, which stands for Science, Technology, Education and Math, Environmental Club, the Bacon Believe Relay for Life team, and substituted every study hall during their junior years to volunteer at the school's writing center conducting peer revisions to other students' writing pieces.

It had always been a "unique" experience growing up as twins, the two explained. However, they admitted in elementary school they



Twin sisters Shannon and Megan Ganley, this year's Salutatorian and Valedictorian of Bacon Academy, respectively, sit side by side like they have spent a majority of their lives. The two will share the graduation stage on Monday, June 24, each delivering a speech to the 2013 graduating class.

weren't always by each other's sides. In fact, the twins did not have classes together from first to fifth grade – which, they said, made their high school memories more meaningful.

"We had the chance to make our own friends and do our own thing," Megan recalled, "and then when we were finally together in high school it was more like, 'oh, hey, here's my sister in my classes now!'"

But enrolled in the same classes or not, it seemed motivating each other had always been on the twins' agendas. Shannon recalled the memory of spending morning bus rides in elementary school next to Megan, where they would take turns quizzing each other on their spelling words of the week. Megan, meanwhile, recalled the nerve-racking memory of Shannon learning fractions before her.

"I got home from school so upset because I could not do my fractions worksheet but [Shannon] managed to help me with it so it actually went pretty good," she said with a laugh.

While the two have had their fair share of reaching milestones together, like getting their licenses and going to prom, another they'll soon share will be delivering speeches on the same stage at graduation – a moment their friends

have also described as a "unique" experience for the two, they said.

"They're joking that while we're doing our speeches one of us should pretend that we drop something, bend down behind the podium and the other should pop back up," Shannon said, laughing.

The Ganley twins also stressed that it was their family – in particular, their mom, stepdad Jay Gladu, dad Tom Ganley and step mom Karen Evangelista – who supported them from the start and helped them to achieve their valedictorian and salutatorian achievements.

With the school year coming to a close, and the only thing left to tackle is writing their graduation speeches, the pair said they certainly are looking forward to a summer of leisure, but they admit they're academics won't be dispelled for too long.

"We're already getting our summer homework for college!" Megan said.

And the two are also hoping to get summer jobs. But after a busy senior year and finishing as the top two in their class, they say making room for down time with friends and family will be a major focus in the warm months ahead.

Sklarz Gets Extension, Pay Raise

by Melissa Roberto

Superintendent of Marlborough Schools David Sklarz will stay in his office at Marlborough Elementary School for at least another three school years, and will receive a 2 percent salary increase for the upcoming fiscal year, based on decisions made by the Board of Education last month.

At its May 30 meeting, the school board unanimously voted both to extend Sklarz's contract one more year, to the 2015-16 school year, as well as give the superintendent the same pay increase as all other administrators and teachers received, who have undergone negotiations in recent weeks.

Chairwoman Ruth Kelly, Vice Chairwoman Betty O'Brien and board members Louise Concodello, Carole Shea, Robert Clarke and Mimi LaPoint were all present at the meeting and voted yes to both votes. Members Shannon Bielaczyc, Judith Kaplan and Karen Tyler were absent from the meeting.

Sklarz was hired as the part-time Marlborough schools superintendent in July 2009, and brought with him extensive experience as a superintendent in other Connecticut school districts and even across the country, including West Hartford Public Schools in Connecticut for 14 years and Santa Cruz Public Schools in California for four years.

Currently, Sklarz is being paid a total of \$63,654 for his work with the district, and his salary increase calls for his salary to go up to \$64,927, starting on July 1.

Sklarz's contract calls for the superintendent to work a total of 110 days each year, and though his schedule changes from year to year, he's often seen at Marlborough Elementary School two to three days each week and attends every Board of Education meeting throughout the year.

Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly spoke as an individual last week to highlight Sklarz's performance.

"I think he has done a very good job for us and I am happy with his performance," Kelly said.

School board secretary Louise Concodello added that she believes Sklarz has done "well" with the school board and that she's "very pleased" with him, especially for the research he's begun on the feasibility study to study the options of what it would take to bring back a foreign language program at the school.

Sklarz's three-year contract is now extended to the 2015-16 year. His pay raise will go into effect at the start of the 2013-14 fiscal year, on July 1.

Obituaries

Colchester

John Edward Luth Sr.

John Edward Luth Sr., 86, of Colchester and formerly of Vernon and Wakefield, R.I., passed away Friday, June 14, at the UConn Medical Center. Born Sept. 11, 1926, in Providence, R.I., he was a son of the late George F. and Mary E. (Sweeney) Luth.

He married Priscilla Field Dunham on May 19, 1951, at St. Williams Church in Warwick, R.I. John and Priscilla raised their family, in many places, in New England.

John retired several years ago after having worked in the meat industry, most recently for Union Meat. After retirement, they moved to Wakefield, R.I., and later to Colchester.

John was a communicant at St. Andrew Church and was a member of the Knights of Columbus in Vernon. He enjoyed gardening but most importantly, he will be remembered as a devoted husband, father and grandfather.

In addition to his wife of 62 years, survivors include four children and their spouses, Deborah and husband Eugene Bedell of Mt. Pleasant, S.C., Brother John E. Luth Jr. of The National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, Stockbridge, Mass., Susan and husband James Leahey of Scotsdale, Ariz., Richard and wife Laura Luth of Berlin; five grandchildren, Zoe and Zachary Bedell, Jessica, Jacob and Alexa Luth and many friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a brother, George T. Luth.

Friends and family attended calling hours Monday, June 17, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral services began Tuesday, June 18, at the funeral home, followed that morning by a celebration of the funeral liturgy at St. Andrew Church. Burial followed in the St. Joseph Cemetery, W. Greenwich, R.I.

Donations in his memory may be made to Christ the King Church, 180 Old North Rd., Kingston, RI 02881.

Marlborough

Virginia Clark

Virginia (Valente) Clark, 95, of Marlborough and formerly of East Hampton and East Hartford, widow of the late Albert N. Clark Sr., died Thursday evening, June 13, at Marlborough Health Care. Born Nov. 4, 1917, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Emanuel and Mary (Amandola) Valente.

Virginia had worked as a bookkeeper for Allied Electric Supply until her retirement.

She leaves her two daughters Virginia Guedesse of East Hartford, Michelle Camarco and her husband Daniel of NC, a sister Anne Consentino, six grandchildren Paul Sheldon, Mark Sheldon, Christina Sheldon, Frank Sheldon, Lisa Clark and Josh Camarco, three great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her husband Albert Clark Sr. and her companion and special friend Albert Pisko, her son Albert Clark Jr. and his wife Sophie, and her two sisters, Connie Maile and Frances Recupero.

A funeral liturgy was celebrated Tuesday, June 18, in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial followed in the family plot in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery in Bloomfield. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Monday, June 17.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Marlborough Health Care Recreation fund 85 Stage Harbor Rd. Marlborough, CT 06447.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Jason Gregory Butler

Jason Gregory Butler was born Wednesday, May 26, at 3:37 a.m., and passed away at 4:04 a.m. Although Jason wasn't in the world very long, he was a fighter and touched everyone he met.

He is survived by his parents, Amber and Gregory Butler of East Hampton; his great-grandparents, Jayne Calvert, Mary and Paul Goulet; his paternal grandparents, Bonnie and Gregory Butler; his maternal grandparents, Linda and Brian Villemare; his uncles, Daniel and Richard Butler; his aunts, Lisette Butler, Cristin and Jerrica Linkovich, and Megan Villemare; his cousins, Keinyan, Janoah and Aubrey Butler, Austin Visintainer and Jeaden Linkovich.

Jason will always be remembered for his spirit and his love to kick while in the womb. Jason, we love you and you live on in everyone you left behind.

Calling hours will be at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, from 10-11 a.m. Saturday, June 22, and a memorial service will follow.

In lieu of flowers, send donations in Jason's name by check or money order to: Sea Strokes of Maine Decorative Painters, Judith Giffin, Treasurer, 58 Mark St., Lewiston, ME 04240.

East Hampton

Anthony F. Radavich

Anthony F. Radavich, 89, of Kensington, formerly of New Britain, beloved husband of Lois (Rakowski) Radavich for 52 years, entered into eternal rest Wednesday, June 12, at The Hospital of Central Connecticut, New Britain.

Born in New Britain, son of the late Charles and the late Mary (Butanus) Radavich, he attended local schools, graduated from New Britain High School in 1942, and received B.S. degrees from Bryant University and the University of Hartford.

A disabled combat veteran of World War II, he trained with the U.S. Marines in San Diego, and served in the U.S. Army Infantry as an automatic rifleman in both European and Pacific Theatres.

Prior to his retirement in 1990, he was employed by the U.S. Treasury Department as an Internal Revenue Agent for 40 years. He was a member of St. Paul Church, and V.F.W. Post 10732 in Berlin.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by a son, James Radavich and his wife Christine of East Hampton, a daughter, Lisa Desmarais and her husband Dennis of Glastonbury, and daughters, Mary Ann and Laurie Radavich of New Britain; grandchildren, Renee and Kevin Radavich and Allison and Josephine Desmarais who were the joy of his life; and several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by two sisters, Stella Zylonis and Helen Igras, and two brothers, Dominic Radavich and Sgt. Francis Radavich.

Funeral services were Tuesday, June 18, from Porter's Funeral Home, 111 Chamberlain Highway, Kensington, with a funeral liturgy at St. Paul's Church on Alling Street. Burial with full military honors followed in Maple Cemetery, Berlin. Friends and relatives called at the funeral home on Monday evening, June 17.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Paul Church, 467 Alling Street, Kensington, CT 06037, or Community Mental Health Affiliates (CMHA), 5 Hart Street, New Britain, CT 06051.

Directions to the funeral home can be found at portersfuneral.com.

East Hampton

Lawrence William Aldridge

Lawrence William Aldridge, 62, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Janet (LeBlanc) Aldridge died Saturday, June 15, at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. Born April 14, 1951, in Hartford he was the son of the late Percy and G. Betty (Euglow) Aldridge.

Larry graduated from Rocky Hill High School in 1969 and had attended Southern Connecticut State University. He owned and operated Precision Parts Mfg. in Portland. He was a sports enthusiast and avid golfer involved in the local golf league and frequently enjoyed wetting a line on Salem River. Another favorite pastime with friends and family included traveling and discovering New England; he always enjoyed taking the road less traveled.

Besides his wife Janet, he is survived by his two sons Adam Aldridge of East Hampton, Gregory Aldridge of East Hampton, two sisters Deborah Clare of Cromwell and Susan Aldridge of Lansdale, Pa. A graveside service will be held Monday, July 1, at 11 a.m., in Rose Hill Memorial Park Cemetery in Rocky Hill.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center, 114 Woodland St., Hartford, CT 06105.



Portland

Lena M. Cyrulik

Lena M. Cyrulik, 93, of Portland, wife of Edward J. Cyrulik, passed away Monday, June 17, at Portland Care and Rehab. She was the daughter of the late Angelo and Angelina (Masselli) Funicello.

Born in Portland April 25, 1920, and a lifelong resident, she was a member of the Church of St. Mary, the Ladies Guild and the Bereavement Committee. She was also a regular card player at the Portland Senior Center.

Besides her husband, she leaves her sons, Edward J. Cyrulik Jr. and his wife, Jeanette of Hollis, N.H., and Lawrence Cyrulik of Portland and his significant other, Patricia; daughters, Judith C. Grippo of Portland and Jeanmarie Charbonneau and her husband, Roger of Portland; grandchildren, Adrienne and her husband, Chris, Michael, Courtney, Andrew and Kevin; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held today, June 21, at 10 a.m., from Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, with a Mass at 11 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary, Portland. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Thursday, June 20, at the funeral home.

Memorial 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.

Andover

Randee Jean Eaton

Randee Jean Eaton (Tetlow), 66, of Andover, passed away peacefully Tuesday, June 18, at her home, surrounded by family and friends. She was born Sept. 7, 1946, in Westerly, R.I. She was the daughter of the late Donald "Lee" and Betty Jean Tetlow.

In addition to her husband Robert of 47 years, she will be sadly missed by her daughters Elisha Sears and Tori Novo; her sons-in-law Norman Sears and Carlos Novo; her sisters Terrie Champlin and Heather Harwood; her niece Jaime Gentile (Harwood), nephews Richard and Bobby John Harwood, Tracy and Troy Champlin. She was a devoted "Gram" to Brandon Sears and "Grammy" to Blake and Eli Novo.

She spent her life caring for her husband, children, grandchildren, family and friends. She will always be remembered as one who put others first.

She was predeceased by her son, Daniel Eaton. There are no calling hours and there will be a private burial.

East Hampton

John B. Hensel

John B. Hensel, 82, of East Hampton, husband of Shirley (Smith) Hensel, died peacefully at Marlborough Health Care with his wife by his side. Born March 2, 1931, in Hannibal, N.Y., he was the son of the late George and Olive (Knotts) Hensel.

John had lived in East Hampton for most of his life and had served his country in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He was the owner and operator of Y&M Services Plumbing and Heating of East Hampton. John was a member of the East Hampton Lions Club and the VFW Post 5095 of East Hampton.

Besides his wife he is survived by his sons, John Hensel Jr. of Pennsylvania, Thomas Hensel and his wife Judith of Colchester; two daughters, Brenda Vecchitto of New Jersey, Bridget Breen and her husband Dave of Lebanon; a brother, Chester Hensel of New York; three granddaughters, Shannon Burkle, Melissa Spencer and April Breen.

The family will receive relatives and friends Monday, June 24, from 6-8 p.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family in the Connecticut State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter, 2075 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 100, Rocky Hill, CT 06067, or to alz.org/ct.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

John 'Jack' Custy

John 'Jack' Custy, 86, beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather, passed peacefully Tuesday, June 18, at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, after a short illness, surrounded by his loving family. John was born Aug. 27, 1926, in Middletown, to the late John and Julia Custy, and was a lifelong resident of Portland.

He was predeceased by his wife Mary Lastrina Custy, the love of his life.

John attended Portland schools and graduated from Ward School of Electronics after serving in the U. S. Army Air Corps in Germany. He worked for many years at Wannerstroms and later retired from the foundry at Pratt & Whitney. He was a devout catholic, a member of the Knights of Columbus and St. Mary's Church in Portland. John was a man of many talents and lived life to its fullest. He was a master woodworker and gardener and loved to travel especially to his beloved Ireland. He so loved his family and cherished every minute with them.

He will be missed by his loving family, Patricia and Timothy Maher, John Custy and Mark DelFranco, James and Kathleen Custy, Christine and Stephen Crouch, Peter Custy, Kathleen & Michael Hamilton; grandchildren Kelly and Shaun Maher, Kate Custy Adams and husband Timothy Adams, Patrick Custy, Ryan and Joel Crouch, Mary Beth and Amanda Hamilton; great-grandchildren Brooke, Tristan, Patrick and Bridget Adams; dear friends Fred and Erin Martinelli. He leaves many dear nieces and nephews and extended family.

In addition to his beloved wife and parents, John was predeceased by his brother and sister, Amenia and William Burkle, and several sisters and brothers-in-law.

A special thanks to the staff at St. Francis Hospital on 8-7 and ICU for their wonderful and compassionate care; especially Lynda Everett, a special family friend and nurse at St. Francis.

The family will receive relatives and friends from 4:30-8 p.m. today, June 21, at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home on Main Street Portland. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, June 22, at St. Mary's Church, Freestone Avenue, Portland. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Mercy High School or Xavier High School's scholarship funds.

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

Marlborough

Lillie M. Heath

Lillie M. Heath, 80, of East Haddam, the loving and longtime companion of Wiley E. Brown, passed away Sunday, June 16, at the Marlborough Medical Center in Marlborough. Lillie was born on August 28, 1932 in Rural Retreat, Va., the daughter of James Randolph and Ida Elizabeth (Hall) Guillion.

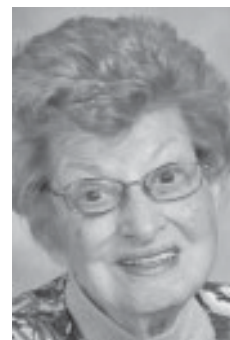
Lillie had been a resident of East Haddam since 2004 and formerly resided in both Chester and Deep River. She had been employed at the Monsanto Company in Deep River working in the packing department.

Lillie loved music, yard work, gardening, and animals. She also had a great love of children. Always mindful of others, she will be lovingly remembered by her beloved Wiley and her entire family.

Besides her companion of over 30 years, Wiley E. Brown of East Haddam, she leaves her son, Wiley Ferris, of Christiansburg, Va.; her two grandsons, one granddaughter, five great-grandsons and one great-granddaughter, all of Christiansburg, Va. Lillie also leaves her sister, Annabelle Cote of Old Saybrook.

Visitation was held Thursday, June 20, at the Robinson, Wright & Weymer Funeral Home, 34 Main St., Centerbrook. Her funeral service will be held at the funeral home today, June 21, at 1 p.m., with interment following in the Fountain Hill Cemetery in Deep River.

To share a memory of Lillie or send a condolence to her family, visit www.fh.com.



Marlborough

Dorothy Plitt Kissman

Dorothy Plitt Kissman, 90, passed away at Legacy Assisted Living Center in Jackson, Mich., on Tuesday, June 11, under the loving care of the Legacy staff, her family and SouthernCare Hospice.

Dorothy was born in Manchester on July 19, 1922, to Florence and Emil Plitt. She graduated from Manchester High School and later married her beloved husband Ernest Kissman Sr. who was also from Manchester. The Kissmans lived in Marlborough for many years before retiring to Scotland. They built their last three homes together, and Dorothy worked daily with Ernie on every phase of the construction. Dorothy later returned to Manchester to live at The Arbors Retirement Center. She moved to Michigan in 2006 to be closer to family, but retained immense pride in her home state.

She was employed at Traveler's Insurance Company and later worked alongside her husband at the Kissman Wood Company in Marlborough. Dorothy enjoyed reading, playing the organ, and supporting the UConn Huskies. Most of all, she enjoyed spending time with her family. Ever a believer in the goodness of people, Dorothy never met a stranger who was undeserving of a smile and some kind words.

She was predeceased by her husband in 1986 and also by her parents and her brother Norman Plitt. Surviving are her son Ernest Jr. and his wife Linda, her daughter Marjorie Rowley and her husband Michael, grandchildren Courtney Weld, Matt Bartlebaugh, Jim Bartlebaugh, Eric Bartlebaugh, Matt Rowley and Paul Rowley, and great-granddaughter Morgan Weld.

Her family received relatives and friends Monday, June 17, at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St. (Route 195), Willimantic. The funeral service took place at the funeral home Tuesday, June 18, with interment following in Palmertown Cemetery, Scotland.

For an online memorial guestbook, visit potterfuneralhome.com.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

First off, a big congrats is in order to East Hampton native Erin Brady! As I'm sure nearly everyone has heard by now, Brady, who grew up in Portland and currently lives in South Glastonbury, won the Miss USA contest Sunday night. It was a very impressive feat – and marked the first time in the 60-year history of the pageant that title's been held by a Connecticut resident.

Back in January, shortly after she won the Miss Connecticut crown, we did a story about Erin. One of the things that were interesting about her was that, while many are in pageants from the time they are very, very young, for Erin, when she won the Miss Connecticut title it was just her second time on a pageant stage. She entered the 2011 contest on a whim, upon the suggestion of a co-worker. What was her prize for that "sure, why not?" entry? Oh, just first runner-up.

One year later, she has not just the state crown, but the national one too. And from here she moves on to represent the United States in the Miss Universe pageant, to be held later this year.

A glance at Wikipedia on Monday showed that Erin has already been added to both the East Hampton and Portland pages under "notable residents." And why not? She's done both those towns mighty proud.

Best of luck in the Miss Universe pageant, Erin. I'm sure all of *Rivereast*-land – heck, all of Connecticut – will be rooting for you.

* * *

It may feel like summer just started – in fact, it quite literally did, as today marks the first official day of the season – but the folks at Billboard have already predicted what the song for summer 2013 is going to be. According to its survey of radio programmers from around the country, that song is..... "Get Lucky" by Daft Punk.

So, if you don't know that song yet, if Billboard's prediction is right, you will. Even if you're not a Top 40 radio listener – and I'll admit that I am – this is the time of year when you get to hear what other people are listening to, be it via people driving past you with their windows rolled down, trips to the beach, or what have you. After all, I'm guessing you all heard "Call Me Maybe" (the summer song of 2012, according to Billboard) once or twice last year, right?

And speaking of summer songs, Billboard has compiled a list of the number 1 song each summer from 1985-2012. I won't bore you with the whole list, but I will say looking at some of the titles definitely stir up summertime memories – such as "Umbrella" by Rhianna in 2007, "Promiscuous" by Nelly Furtado in 2006, "Let Me Blow Ya Mind" by Eve, featuring Gwen Stefani, in 2001, and of course "Macarena" in 1996. So I guess Billboard knows what it's talking about.

In other words, it's time to hunker down and get used to "Get Lucky."

* * *

Here's something interesting: as sports fans are aware, the Boston Bruins are playing the Chicago Blackhawks in the Stanley Cup. How heated are things? Well, if you're a Dunkin' Donuts regular, don't go asking for a Boston Kreme doughnut in Chicago.

Not only may the utterance of the word "Boston" out there be frowned upon this week, you might not even get your doughnut.

It seems Chicago-area Dunkin' Donuts have renamed the popular custard-filled pastry – indeed, it's one of my favorite doughnuts – the "Chicago Kreme." Same doughnut, but with a new name – one that I'm guessing allows Blackhawks fans to order up the doughnut without feeling a twinge of guilt.

It's just for the duration of the Stanley Cup, I'm sure, and it's only in Chicago. And it's all in good fun.

* * *

Here's a quick one-line joke I came across recently: A skeleton walks into a bar and orders a drink and a mop.

* * *

It hasn't been the Mets year. Anyone knows that. But Sunday I feared might represent a new low. It was the fifth inning. The Mets were already down 1-0, and the Cubs had runners on first and second, with two outs. The Cubs' Alfonso Soriano was at the plate, and hits a ball that Mets' third baseman David Wright dove and made a nice stop of. He gets up, realizes he didn't have a play at second, so he throws to first. Right over first baseman Daniel Murphy's head.

The ball bounced off the railing right back to Murphy, who threw home to try to get the Cubs' Starlin Castro, who was attempting to score from second. That too was a bad throw, sailing right past the catcher. The Mets had shortstop Omar Quintanilla backing up the play, so he fielded the ball and then *he* attempted to throw home, to try to get Nate Schierholtz, who was on first place when this craziness started, and was attempting to score.

You can guess what happened next. *Omar's* throw was bad, sailing right past the catcher again. Fortunately, pitcher Jeremy Hefner was backing up that play, and Soriano – who was running the bases throughout this whole thing – had to stay at third.

So, on one grounder to third, there were no less than *three* bad throws. I could practically hear the *Benny Hill* music in my head as that all unfurled.

Amazingly, the Mets came back and won the game, scoring four in the bottom of the ninth, thus saving them the ignominy of having to answer question after question after question about that fifth inning throw.

But man, what a display that was.