

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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Plungers brave the cold water, and cold air temperatures, last Saturday morning at Lake Pocotopaug. Over 200 plungers participated that morning, and the Plunge itself raised over \$25,000 in monetary and food item donations for the East Hampton food bank.

Hundreds Take 'Plunge' for Charity

by John Tyczkowski

The fifth annual East Hampton Turkey Plunge was a record-setter in terms of attendance, but also in terms of temperature.

As 216 plungers stood ready to venture forth on the banks of Lake Pocotopaug last Saturday morning, temperatures hovered around 40 degrees, despite occasional sun peeking through the clouds.

"This is the coldest year so far," Gabriella Crean, one of the organizers, said. "We're definitely 'freezin' for a reason' this year."

Caroline and Gabriella Crean said they were the impetuses behind the Turkey Plunge. They said that one evening during dinner they told their parents how they were lucky to live in the U.S., after learning about hunger in Africa in school.

The girls' father, Tom, told them that there may also be starving children in East Hampton, and Caroline and Gabriella said they wanted to help somehow.

"My dad said he always had the idea of doing this, and then he said, 'Why don't we actually do it this year?'" Gabriella said. "At first I thought he was kidding, but then he actually started doing stuff, so we started doing it."

She said the first Turkey Plunge was a pleasant surprise for everyone involved when they ended raising around \$11,000 that first year.

"We only aimed to raise \$1,000. We definitely didn't expect to make as much as we did,"

Gabriella said. "We raised a lot of money, and we were really amazed by that!"

The money raised each year goes to the East Hampton Food Bank, and is used to provide Thanksgiving and Christmas season food.

Gabriella said the Turkey Plunge never sets a specific goal for the money they raise.

"We hope for the best, and we just try to bring as many people together as we can, and we try to do as much as we can to help out," she said. "I'm really happy that whatever we raise can help out."

Caroline said she's seen the Turkey Plunge grow noticeably over the past few years, in terms of both donations raised and attendance, and is happy about that.

See Plunge for Charity Page

Early Deadline Next Week

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the *Rivereast* is printing the Nov. 28 issue one day early. Therefore, all news copy – letters to the editors, news releases, etc. – **must** be received by noon Monday, Nov. 24. No exceptions will be made. The deadline for advertisers will also be a day early, at noon on Tuesday, Nov. 25.

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at the *Rivereast*.

Colchester Schools Serving Local Produce

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Following a petition calling for the banning of GMOs from Colchester school cafeterias, the school system now has a Farm-to-School program in place, bringing fresh, local produce to all students.

The petition, started by a parent in the spring of 2013, stressed that food containing GMOs – or genetically-modified organisms – should be labeled as such and that cafeterias should have only GMO-free food in them. The petition was brought to community activist teacher Chris Juhl at Bacon Academy, and garnered 200 signatures.

After the petition was viewed by the Bacon student council and brought to the Board of Education, the Farm-to-School program for Colchester schools began.

The Farm-to-School initiative is a program coordinated by Farm Fresh New London County Schools (FFNLCS) as an effort to bring schools and local agriculture together to serve local food and teach about healthy foods.

According to the FFNLCS website, the project's goals are to establish a sustainable, local farm-to-school system that improves nutrition, reduces obesity and reduces food inse-

curity among children, support local agriculture and improve the capacity of small farms to respond to the needs of local schools in the areas of fresh produce procurement, experiential learning for students and increased opportunities to boost viability, and to encourage and support school garden programs among county school systems using an established clearinghouse of national resources and best-practice models.

However, Juhl said the real workers behind the Farm-to-School initiative in Colchester are Bacon students Mitchell Hallee and Lauren Hickey.

"On Oct. 31, students in all the schools were served kale from Provider Farm in Salem," Hickey said. "I was initially apprehensive; it was a tough sell."

Cafeteria supervisor Sharon Floyd prepared the kale which included a Caesar salad and kale chips.

"I was pleasantly surprised," Hickey said of the success of the kale.

After the kale was served, Hallee and Hickey sent out 'thank you' notes to all of the school cafeterias, and asked for feedback. Hickey said

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A new Farm-to-School program brought butternut squash to the Bacon Academy cafeteria this week. Here, Chris Juhl (left), Bacon's community activist teacher, distributes samples of the vegetable to students on Tuesday.



This year's colder temperatures led to plungers dashing in and out of the lake fairly quickly. Most skipped the traditional "double plunge" and instead headed indoors to hot chocolate and warm clothes after their initial dip.

Plunge for Charity cont. from Front Page

"My dad says we basically give people the avenue to do what they already would want to do," she said. "The community has really come together around this."

Some celebrities present included Miss Connecticut US Ashley Boate and two-time WWF champion Bob Backlund, as well as Sonar, the Hartford Wolfpack's mascot and the Connecticut Tigers minor league baseball team's mascot.

Sadly, no feathered toms were seen at the event, however.

The organizers were not short of verbal irony, though, with songs such as Foreigner's "Cold As Ice" and "Hot Blooded" and the Rolling Stones' "She's So Cold" blasting over the speaker system there.

Caroline even received a shout-out with a sing-along rendition of "Sweet Caroline," to pass the time before the awards.

The Turkey Plunge's costume tradition continued in earnest as well, with teams of people dressed up as golfers, turkeys and 1970s disco dancers, among others.

Ann McLaughlin made a return this year to the Plunge, and her and her team's costumes had a theme of "Save their backs, lighten their packs," referring to back problems caused by students' increasing backpack loads.

McLaughlin said this latest effort will be kicking into high gear come the new year.

State Rep. Melissa Ziobron returned this year for her second Turkey Plunge.

"Last year I went up to my waist, but I think I'll only go up to my ankles this time!" she laughed, referring to the exceptionally cold weather for this year.

After over an hour of people jumping, running, walking and dancing around the beach at Sears Park, it was time for the Plunge's annual awards ceremony.

Tom Crean began with thanking everyone at this year's event and all previous years for their support.

Caroline then read and presented awards along with Gabriella and Tom.

Ann McLaughlin, at 78 years old, won the award for Most Preserved Plunger. The Youngest Plunger was Sarah Evans, aged 18 months – she only dipped a toe into the lake. The Plunger from the Furthest Distance was Rae Studholme from Boulder, Colo.

Father Walter Nagle of St. Patrick Catholic Church won Plunger of the Year.

The "Non-Judgmentals" from Norwich Superior Court won Best Team Theme. They were dressed in white fuzzy wigs and black judge's robes. Also, the East Hampton Soccer Club Boys Under 9 won the Largest Team award.

Also, the top fundraiser of the Plunge was Tasos Papaglannopoulos of Loco Perro.

The total money raised this year was about \$25,000. This figure counted \$20,000 in donations as well as \$5,000 from donation matching. The donation matching was part of a cooperative effort between Liberty Bank and the East Hampton Rotary Club, which matched every dollar donation with 25 cents.

Organizers also received over \$600 in food donation items.

Over 50 individuals and businesses, each donating from between \$50 and \$200, helped sponsor teams and individuals this year.

Also, 50 volunteers from the fire and police departments, the Volunteer Ambulance Association, Parks and Recreation, the high school and several individuals and families helped run the Plunge.

The Plunge itself was a bit rushed due to the cold weather, but was not short on enthusiasm, with lots of laughs, smiles and cold water-related splashing and general hilarity.

Various plungers' descriptions of the cold water and weather ranged from "Freaking freezing" to "A bit nippy."

"I usually go in twice, but not this time," Tom said through shivers, indoors afterward, referring to the Plunge tradition of heading back into the lake for a second round.

Alexis Crean, Tom's wife, said she was very proud of East Hampton and of all the generosity town residents have shown over the past five years.

"They've been nothing short of amazing, contributing to this cause. They really come together for those in need," she said. "This is what living in a small town is all about."

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More photos from the event are available on the *Rivereast's* Facebook page, located at facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin. For more information on the Turkey Plunge, go to alexiscrean.wix.com/turkeyplunge-1.



As a way to promote the addition of butternut squash, Bacon's community activist class made posters and hung squash from the ceiling outside of the cafeteria.

Local Produce cont. from Front Page

they learned that, at Jack Jackter Intermediate School, 17 students tried kale the first day, and then more on the second day.

Through the FFNLCS program, each month features a "harvest of the month" produce. While October was kale, November is butternut squash.

Hickey, Hallee and Juhl decided to approach the butternut squash in a different way. On Nov. 18, the day before it would be served in the cafeteria as an option included in lunch or as a side dish, the three hit the halls of Bacon Academy serving small samples of the squash – and the *Rivereast* came with them.

Some of the students at Bacon seemed hesitant, but many inquired about the recipe and the vegetable itself. Along with the tasting, the group passed out a flyer with information about squash and the program.

The flyer stated, "Locally grown, farm fresh fruits and vegetables are good for your body and supporting local farms supports our economy so put Connecticut grown on your tray."

It also listed the recipe the group used for the butternut squash which was a simple roasted squash with olive oil and optional maple syrup.

The butternut squash is known for its amount of Vitamin A; there is 457 percent of the recommended daily amount of the vitamin in just one cup of cooked squash. The vegetable is also

known as a source for fiber, potassium, and magnesium.

At the Nov. 12 Board of Education meeting, school officials talked about the initiative – and congratulated the students behind it.

"We're celebrating the beginning of the Farm-to-School initiative," Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said, adding of the students meeting, "I'm proud of them."

Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu also praised the teenagers' efforts.

"It's 100 percent student-led," Mathieu said. "Kudos to the student leaders."

Floyd credited Hallee and Hickey during the Board of Education meeting for working hard on the program.

"There are no two better students to work with," Floyd said. "Thank you Lauren, and Mitch, for going above and beyond."

Bacon Academy Student Council president Erica Boucher and advisor Thomas Frickman also worked on the program.

Juhl said one of the next efforts is to hopefully have five raised garden beds approved at Bacon.

"They can grow a crop that food services can use," Juhl said, adding that local restaurant Tim's Bistro "is looking to buy it if we grow. There are also so many potential classes involved such as business or marketing."



Last Tuesday, Nov. 11, a crowd gathered at Veterans Memorial Park for this year's Veterans Day Ceremony. Along with a number of speeches by individuals such as former first selectman Ed Turn and fifth- and sixth-grade students from Andover Elementary School, the event included the benediction by veteran George Kitchin, top left, the laying of the memorial wreath at the veterans' monuments, top right, and, seen below, a 12-gun salute.

Andover Honors Veterans

by Geeta Schrayter

Sunshine and blue skies greeted the crowd that gathered at Veterans Memorial Park last Tuesday, Nov. 11, for this year's Veterans Day Ceremony. With the giant American flag that hung from the covered bridge blowing in the breeze, various town officials and individuals spoke in honor of those who have served, or are currently serving in the Armed Forces.

The ceremony was put together by the Andover Veterans Day Committee and featured the participation of various Andover Elementary School students.

As the ceremony got underway last year, Andover Elementary School students Daniel Tamburro, Chloe Weathers, Lily Shevchenko and Rachel Arsenault performed the National Anthem under the direction of music teacher Matt Piros.

Afterwards, Brody and Trenton Gouchoe placed the memorial wreath in front of the veterans' monuments with the help of First Selectman Bob Burbank, and a 12-gun salute took place by Richard Swartwout, John Galpin and Rick Scheiner with the Sixth Connecticut Regiment.

As the smoke from the muskets floated up through the air, Brandon and Gabi D'Amicol led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance, and a benediction took place.

The Veterans Day address was given by former first selectman Ed Turn, who had plenty to say regarding the importance of veterans and the need for improved care for them once their tenure in the service comes to an end.

"It has been often said that without our veterans, Americans would be speaking Russian, German or perhaps, Japanese," he read. "Regardless of which view of alternative history

you take, we *do know* that without our veterans America would not be America."

He added, "Those who defend us from our enemies must be supported. Whether their service was in Baghdad or Beirut, we need to serve veterans as well as they serve us – even when the guns have temporarily stopped firing."

Turn continued, "Veterans don't ask for much. They do not want to be in a 'special class,' but benefits are a mere drop in the bucket compared to the financial and human cost of war. And while not all veterans see war, all who served in the military have expressed a willingness to fight if called to."

He concluded, "Veterans have given us freedom, security and the greatest nation on earth. It is impossible to put a price on that. We must remember them. We must appreciate them. God bless you all for being here, God bless our veterans and God bless America."

After Turn took a seat, Andover Elementary School students became the focus once more as five fifth- and sixth-grade students shared essays written on the subject "What Veterans Day means."

According to Andover Elementary School Principal John Brody, each student in fifth- and sixth-grade had been tasked with crafting such an essay. Each teacher then selected a few essays from their class and from those, eight were chosen to be read at the Veterans Day Ceremony and the school-wide assembly held last Monday.

"There were so many good ones, but we chose three to be read at the in-school assembly and then five at the ceremony," Brody explained. He added that during the school assembly, a bonus essay was also read that had

been written by a student who recently joined the school from Ukraine.

"She read her veterans' essay in Ukrainian and then her teacher read the translation," Brody stated.

Last Tuesday, the five essays that were read shared themes such as bravery and gratitude.

Sixth-grade student Maggie Tighe spoke first, and said, "Veterans Day is a day to honor those who served our country to keep the freedom we proudly hold. When you think of America, you think freedom, and this is all due to veterans."

She added "for all of us, for all of America, [veterans] leave their family to help our country and to keep our freedom. I would never be able to leave my family for a year or more at a time and only see them a couple times a year. They sacrifice their family time and seeing their wife or husband so they can help our country."

After Tighe, fifth-grader Liam Calhoun took to the podium to share his own thoughts on "those courageous, determined and honorable people" known as veterans.

Calhoun shared what many consider "difficult" is nothing compared to what veterans go through.

"Some of us think it's so difficult if we have a lot of work to do. Or, some of us think that it's bad that we can't have our favorite food for dinner. Compared to what veterans went through all the time, those problems aren't problems at all," he read.

Calhoun added veterans should be thought of every day. He called them leaders and saviors who inspire people and concluded "veterans made this country great because of their heroic hearts and determined minds."

Fifth-grader Amanda Moore was similarly grateful. Thinking of veterans, she said, brought to mind adjectives such as "brave, kind, strong and selfless."

"Living in our country we can take our free-

dom for granted," she read. "We go to school, parents go to work and we don't always think about the sacrifices veterans have made for us which is why I think Veterans Day is an important reminder of the heroes we should honor."

Pierce Perez, a fifth-grader, spoke next and mentioned some of the reasons veterans are honored.

"We honor veterans because of the personal sacrifices they make for our freedoms," he read. "We honor veterans because they protect us in so many ways, and allow us to live freely."

Perez added, "As an American, I am extremely thankful to the veterans and the sacrifices they have made to give us the freedoms we have. I think veterans should be honored because these sacrifices allow me to experience many freedoms as I grow up in the United States of America."

The speeches concluded with fifth-grade student Gianelle Miano, who said "it is so important that we thank them because their jobs are very important and hard to do."

She added she couldn't imagine what life would be like without veterans.

"I would be scared to go out in my town," Miano read. "I would feel uncomfortable all the time. It would be rare to be happy because I'd be thinking at any moment something bad could happen because our country was not protected."

She concluded, "We wouldn't know what to do without [veterans]. So please take the time to thank a veteran, especially on Veterans Day, because they are so brave!"

As the speeches concluded, the ceremony wound down with the recognition of six recently deceased veterans, a bagpipe performance and the benediction.

And with that, those present were left to mull over the words of those who spoke, and to think about and hopefully thank veterans – not just on Nov. 11, but every other day as well.



Marlborough Talks Moose Property Purchase

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Selectmen held a public forum this week to gather ideas regarding the potential purchase of the former Moose Lodge property on South Main Street.

Located at 303 South Main St., the property includes a one-story building, a pavilion and two fields, one soccer and one baseball, that are smaller than regulation fields. The town had been leasing the fields from the Moose before the Moose disbanded earlier this year in August.

The disbandment of Moose Lodge 1631 came after they lacked enough members to cover all necessary officer positions. According to a source, when a lodge closes its doors, Moose International is responsible for getting rid of it and selling its assets which would include the property.

In 2012, the property was assessed at \$235,810 and was appraised at \$338,300. The building was constructed in 1955 and is 5,225 square feet. The property includes 19.5 acres of which nine acres are wetlands. The realtor for the property is asking \$425,000.

"We've taken a look at it," First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski said. "We want to hear thoughts on the purchase and potential uses. It would have to go to public approval for the actual purchase."

Gaudinski said the board is looking at a potential Department of Energy and Environmental Protection open space grant to cover part of the purchase. However, that grant would not cover any buildings on the property and place restrictions on the use of the property, Gaudinski said.

"It would be for passive recreation," Gaudinski said. "The max the grant would be is 65 percent of the property, and the grant application is due March 1, 2015."

Gaudinski clarified that because nine acres of the property is wetlands, the town would be limited in what could be developed on the property.

"The building would require extensive work to bring it up to code," Gaudinski said. "The soccer fields are good for the under-10 [years old] group and the baseball field is more like tee ball-sized."

Currently, Gaudinski said, the soccer field is surrounded by wetlands and the baseball field could only be improved somewhat to make it slightly bigger.

"It's restricted to recreational use," selectman Dick Shea said of the current zoning of the property. The property is zoned DRE, for recreational use only. "They can't develop; no houses or businesses. I wouldn't imagine that would change."

Director of Planning and Development Pe-

ter Hughes said the Moose originally approached the selectmen in 2010 about the same topic and they found it was difficult to expand the recreational fields; however, a potential basketball or tennis court could fit.

Barbara Lazzari, chairwoman of the Recreation Commission, said there is always a need for additional fields.

"Those are practice fields for the younger children," Lazzari said of the Moose property. "They could be expanded and used for additional practice and playtime. Losing them would impact their program."

Gaudinski said the existing building would likely be demolished, due to the costs of repairing it.

"The septic system is under the parking lot and installed in the '60s," Gaudinski said. "There's a question on its condition. The floor has been sanded so often there are nails sticking up. We don't know where the leeching field is for the well. We would need to do our due diligence in looking at the building. We haven't gone to that length of inspection yet. It would need to go down to bare walls and rebuilt. Then there's the question of what we would use it for."

Fire Marshal Joe Asklar questioned how much the town would want to even offer on the property since the asking price seemed high.

Gaudinski replied at this point they are only exploring if there is interest in the property and not yet at the point of asking price.

Resident Al Daigle questioned the town's already existing debt, and asked why the town would want to go into more debt for one property. Gaudinski said she will put the debt chart online for residents to view. Daigle also questioned why residents were only hearing about the sale now, when the Moose had approached the selectmen back in 2010; he received no response to the question.

Resident Bruce Rich said he would like to see the purchase as an opportunity to preserve open space forever.

"I don't see a big need for the building," Rich said. "The property itself is desirable. The pavilion could be rented out for private parties. I'm in favor."

Recreation Commission member David LeJeune said long term he would like to see the fields consolidated and be able to use the land currently staged for the sewer project as fields.

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom said the asking price of \$425,000 seemed "extremely optimistic" to him.

"It has a limited use," Hjulstrom said. "If we were to purchase, we should do it without involving grants that would put restrictions on the property. If we try and sell it off later, we



The town is considering what to do with the former Marlborough Moose Lodge, located at 303 South Main St. The property is currently up for sale, after the lodge disbanded earlier this year.

wouldn't be restricted by the grant from the state."

Resident Christine Rich said she had been in the building multiple times, and simply couldn't see what the town could use the building for. She asked Gaudinski what the price of tearing the building down would be, to which Gaudinski replied, "The rough estimate would be \$75,000."

However, Hughes pointed out that figure does not include abatement, which would be necessary if the town finds lead or asbestos in the building.

"We would also need to properly abandon the septic and the well," Gaudinski said.

John Haines, a resident who lives on Jerry Daniels Road, which the property abuts, said he would like to see the building torn down so it does not become an eyesore at the end of his street.

"A falling-down building at the end of the street is not a good idea," Haines said. "Other towns maintain open space by buying properties to keep them from development. The price is vastly overstated and without a zone change, the property is worth zip."

Alan Miller, another resident, said if the town does buy the property, it should take the \$75,000 price of tearing down the building off of the purchase price.

Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly said she would like to see the property used for other recreational uses more aimed at adults rather than just fields for children.

"It's very close to fishing and the Air Line Trail," Kelly said. "The pavilion could be utilized for picnicking. We could do nature and walking trails."

Resident John Grasso said he agreed. "We should think more broadly than just fields," Grasso said. "Most of us are not kids or youth."

Grasso said he's thought "long and hard" about the potential uses of the building and has not thought of one.

Another resident also agreed with Kelly's idea, and also mentioned it could be used as a park for adults, with things like bocce courts and other things adults enjoy doing.

Meanwhile, Asklar had his own ideas for the property; he wondered if another firehouse could be put there, since that end of town is the most difficult to service.

Hughes said currently there are no grants to build a firehouse that he knows of because the town's income level is too high except for a Small Cities grant. The zoning would also have to be changed.

Gaudinski said she received two letters from residents, which she read at the meeting. Both suggested uses for the property other than just fields including a lighted track to walk or run or a dog park.

At the end of the meeting, Gaudinski said she appreciated all the comments and will continue the conversation with the other selectmen to determine the next steps.

Marlborough to Seek STEAP Funds for Water System

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Selectmen voted to move forward with submitting a STEAP grant application for the next phase of the water system project in the center of town.

After holding a public hearing Monday following their discussion on the former Moose lodge, the selectmen determined the board would go forward with submitting the \$500,000 grant application to the state.

Phase II of the water system project would include the completion of the loop on School Drive including the part that was cut from the initial phase because of budget issues along with drilling two additional wells, installing a 30,000-gallon holding tank and some other mechanical enhancements, according to Director of Planning and Development Peter Hughes.

The STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) funds economic development, community conservation and quality of life projects for localities that are ineligible to receive Urban Action bonds, according to the State of Connecticut website.

"Last year we applied for \$500,000 for Phase I of the project," Hughes said. "We got it and are starting the loop."

However after Connecticut Water, who had originally been working with the town, pulled out, the town discovered that not all of the work was done by Connecticut Water that they had thought had been done, Hughes said. After that happened, the town had to cut some of the plans for Phase I due to budget.

"This application picks up the water line and loops it back to the school," Hughes said.

Along with the extra distance, the new application will go toward a 30,000-gallon holding tank, which is needed for the town to have one day's supply of water on hand at all times. This is a requirement if the town were to become a public water system.

To become a public water system, the town would need to be serving 25 people with the system however they can put as many commercial buildings onto the system without becoming a public water system, Hughes said. He went on to say that requirement is odd and that he himself "doesn't understand it."

The phase would also include electronic readings for the wells and automatic meter readings through electronics.

"To finish the loop is about \$100,000,"

Hughes said. "It's about \$25,000 a well, the tank is \$75,000 and the electronic reading is \$20,000."

However, Gaudinski confirmed Wednesday, the official figures have not yet been drafted for the application.

Hughes said the ultimate goal is to be able to provide fire protection in the future. The town is placing the necessary 12-inch pipe, Hughes said, for fire protection; however, a much larger tank would be needed to handle the pressure and amount of water firefighters use.

Lindalee Favry of School Drive, who has had problems with the town's water and sewer systems, before regarding her own well, expressed concerns over how many wells are behind the elementary school.

"Today there are five outside and one in the school," Hughes said. "One is offset and not connected and one is not used because of low yield."

Favry reminded the board of her previous issues involving her 16-foot shallow dug well, which went dry after she had hooked up to the sewer system. She ended up having to drill a new well after that ordeal.

Hughes assured Favry that if anything were to affect her well, the town would provide her with a water connection. Hughes also stated the town would test the four or five wells in the perimeter of the well field before drilling two new ones.

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom asked how the section of Route 66 to School Drive that they are not doing in Phase I affects the overall project.

"It's desirable to have a loop so the water is continually moving although not essential," Hughes said.

However, once Phase I is installed; it will not yet be used.

"We are putting the pipe in and will close the valve," Hughes said. "It won't be an active system until there is an active user."

The hope is that a grocery store or new Marlborough Tavern will come into town and hook up to the water system, Hughes said.

The work on Phase I will begin this week, Gaudinski said, and the application for the STEAP grant will be submitted before the Nov. 28 deadline.

Hebron Board Changes Transportation Policy

by Geeta Schrayter

In the wake of a September incident in which a first-grader was accidentally dropped off at the wrong bus stop, the Hebron Board of Education last week voted to change the school system's transportation policy.

The September incident was resolved quickly and no one was injured – after the substitute driver operating the bus that day was told by another student the first-grader had been dropped at the wrong stop, the driver went back and picked the child up – but it prompted the school board to review current protocol, and board members discovered there was no school policy regarding drop-off procedures for younger students. In response, the board began contemplating a policy addition that would make it mandatory someone was present at the bus stop to meet the student in order for them to be dropped off.

Board of Education Chairwoman Maryanne Leichter read the new policy at the meeting, which states “students in pre-kindergarten through second grade must have a parent or other designated individual present at the bus stop in order for the child(ren) to be let off the bus. If there is no parent or designated individual present, the student will be brought back to school for pick up.”

“We had a lot of feedback from board members, parents and teachers regarding what to do when nobody is at the bus stop,” Leichter explained, adding the board's attorneys were also consulted, and the above addition was what they came up with.

But board member Amy Lynch Gracias wasn't pleased with the addition.

“To some degree, what happened is horrifying, but I think this is an overreaction. We can not eliminate 100 percent of risk” she stated.

“I think this is a bad idea. I think this is going to seriously impact a lot of families.”

However, Superintendent of Schools Jeff Newton countered, “The occurrence that happened with a first-grade student wouldn't have happened if this was in place and that's how I'm looking at it – that's the point.”

Board member Erica Bromley, who helped work on the addition, said, “The purpose of this is to kind of put it back on the parent to say ‘you need to be responsible to have someone designated to be there.’”

She added, “Really, all this means is kids in pre-kindergarten through second grade won't be left off alone.”

Lynch Gracias added her concern was that a number of scenarios might take place, like a bus driver not seeing a parent standing at the door instead of the driveway one day, who then brings the child back to the school; or a bus driver not knowing whether or not a parent is present for each child at a group bus stop.

“This is a serious step and I'm not in support of it,” she stated.

Board member Ramon Bieri added his own thoughts to the mix, saying he had “strong confidence in the school system to at least be open enough to residents that are in circumstances like Amy brought up.” He spoke to Lynch Gracias and added, “You made a very clear point that this isn't going to be 100 percent, but in all honesty we try to create 100 percent security in schools but it is impossible, but we're trying, and I think this is a very solid step.”

Bromley furthered, “I don't think it's ever going to fit every single person but for me personally, as the mother of a second-grader, I would never want my kid to get off the bus by their self at the age of five, six or seven without

someone there.”

She continued, “I think it's the first step and the best step we have at this point based on the feedback of the community, which we're trying to take into account, and feedback from the attorneys and using that to make the best forward step we can make knowing we'll never have perfection and there will always be extenuating circumstances that are valid.”

Bromley concluded not having a policy for the younger students “scares me to no end. So if we can take one step, even if it's far from perfect, I am 100 percent in.”

When discussion came to an end, the board approved the addition, which will be added to Transportation Policy 5019, by a vote of 5-1, with Lynch Gracias against.

* * *

Also at the meeting, Gilead Hill School head teacher Barbara Wilson shared information on the possibility of a grant expansion that would offer 18 new preschool slots for four-year-olds for the 2015-16 school year.

Wilson explained she was informed in September that the town was selected to potentially receive an additional grant for school readiness. She explained the state had applied for a federal grant that will be good for “at least four years” and if the state receives the grant, “then it's getting dispersed to towns.”

The town that is the main focus of the grant, Wilson furthered, is Bridgeport; however, other competitive districts will be included – Hebron among them. The additional slots will be for children in families who are “at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.”

For example, for a family of four, Wilson said, this would equal a household income of

\$48,000; for a family of five, \$56,000; and for a family of six, \$64,000.

“Going into this year, we have had enough interest and the statistics that would support having that classroom,” Wilson stated.

Along with a new class the money would also provide some additional funding for the current class that started via another school readiness grant.

Wilson said there would be \$12,800 per student for the new class; there would also be \$6,800 per student in the current class, which would bring all of the students to \$12,800.

Wilson furthered she also inquired whether the money could be used for transportation.

“We weren't able to serve everyone in Hebron because a lot of folks can't get transportation,” Wilson said, “so I said, ‘Could it provide a van or bus?’ and they [the state] said, ‘Yes.’”

She added, “Nothing is set in stone. The state applied and we'll find out in December. If we're awarded it, we'll get the opportunity to solicit the town to see if we have the four-year-olds who fall under this income guideline, and if so, then we can go forward with it.”

The grant would also provide funding for startup costs like furniture and supplies.

Board member Carol Connolly called the possibility “really amazing.”

“I think this is a really wonderful opportunity and you [Wilson] should be commended for your work with school readiness,” she said, adding “I can't wait and I hope we get this.”

* * *

The next Hebron Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. in the Gilead Hill School music room.

Residents Push to Outsource Field Management at RHAM

by Geeta Schrayter

At Monday's RHAM Board of Education meeting, various individuals were present to express their support for outsourcing management of the school's fields to the Hebron Parks and Recreation Department.

Numerous discussions have taken place of late over the state of the athletic fields at the schools. Last summer, a group of volunteers got together to clean up the fields, and since then, conversations have occurred regarding how best to proceed so the fields are kept in better shape. Previously, people had said the district wasn't putting enough money toward field upkeep, and that the work was too much for the current staff to handle.

Hebron resident Randy Scully was first to speak at the meeting. He called the fields at the school “unsatisfactory” and shared there were times RHAM teams had to give up the home field advantage and play on an opponent's field because those at RHAM weren't good enough.

“It's certainly not anything I'm proud of, being a taxpayer,” he said.

However, Scully labeled the fields in Hebron, managed by Parks and Recreation Director Rich Calarco, “outstanding.”

“He's a professional,” Scully said. “This would be, in my opinion, moving the school in the right direction.”

Resident Chris Caputo, who coaches Tri-County Baseball and sees fields across the state through his work as an umpire, added there was “no comparison” between “Rich Calarco- and non-Rich Calarco-maintained fields.”

John Jebson and Ray Bell, both of Amston, also spoke in support of the idea.

“No disrespect to the current folks managing the fields, but we have someone in town who does this for a living,” said Jebson. “Rich does this professionally. He knows what he's doing. Let's let him use the knowledge base that he has.”

Bell added the state of the fields was “a little embarrassing.”

“We have high expectations for our kids here in town and I think we should have high expectations as parents, coaches and administrators to provide the resources for them so they can be successful,” Bell stated.

Also present Monday was Hebron Board of Selectmen Chairwoman Gayle Mulligan, who added the town “is in full support and has the backing of Rich taking over the [field] management.”

Later in the meeting, a motion was made by

the board to authorize Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski to enter into a service contract with Hebron for management of the school's athletic fields – something Siminski said would be budget-neutral; he said the schools had been paying the company TruGreen to help maintain the fields anyway.

During discussion, board member Joe O'Conner said “I really do think this is a win-win for everybody.” He added Calarco thinks up alternative solutions to field issues, like using Nematodes to combat grubs since pesticides can't be used on school grounds.

Siminski added another benefit to the agreement is proximity, since Calarco works in town.

“If something needs some quick attention” he said, Calarco would be able to come by almost immediately “rather than waiting to be put on a schedule et cetera.”

He added this agreement would mean the fields receive “a little bit more love and care.”

The motion was approved unanimously and will now head to the Hebron Board of Selectmen for the final okay. The contract will run through June 30, Siminski explained, and will then pick up again from July 1 through June 30, 2016.

* * *

Also at the meeting, a presentation was given on technology use at the school by library media specialist Geri Dineen.

Dineen began by explaining all of the technology used by students – the hardware, software and applications – tie into the Connecticut Information and Technology Literacy Skills Framework. These skills, she said, are frequently considered “soft skills” because they're not measured the same way as subjects like math and science “but are apparent when kids, teachers and parents are using them.”

The framework includes information strategies, which is about how well students can locate information and evaluate said whether it's from a qualified source; the ability to process and apply the information they've garnered; technology use, or how to use the tools effectively; responsibility, or ensuring the technology use is done ethically and legally; and assessment, which Dineen said had multiple levels.

She explained students are being asked to think about how they use technology and information, what technology skills play into their strengths and learning styles and what type of

information is best represented in texts, graphs, oral reports etc.

“We're not only asking teachers and students to develop these skills, but for students to think about how they learn,” she said.

Dineen also shared some of the productivity tools used at the schools, including programs like Animoto, for video production; Glogster, which creates digital posters; Pixton, which creates comic strips; Voicethread, which is an interactive collaboration and sharing tool; and Microsoft Office Suite.

However, some of the latter is being replaced with work done through Google Apps for Education, which is currently being piloted at the schools.

Google Apps for Education is a closed, secure organization, Dineen stated.

“No one gets in without a log-in and password,” she said, adding many of the tools “reflect those found in Microsoft Office.”

“I think the best thing that comes with Google is now there are student email accounts” she said, and added 72 of the top schools reported by *U.S. News and World Report* use Google School, and even if a student doesn't attend one of those schools, most use some sort of collaborative tool, and “all of these tools have the same component pieces.”

Other benefits of Google Apps for Education, she shared, include unlimited storage in the Cloud for students, eliminating the need for flash drives, and allowing for work to be accessed from any computer. In addition, families don't have to worry about purchasing Microsoft Office.

“There are a lot of real positive perks for our families and students that I'm always glad to hear about” Dineen stated.

Also at the meeting, social studies teacher Jarrid Clifton shared some of the ways he uses Google Apps for Education in his classroom. He said his students use tools like Google Slides, which he said is like Microsoft PowerPoint but easier to use when it comes to embedding video; and Google Forms which is used to create surveys and quizzes.

Whether at home or at school, he said he can access all of his files and students can work collaboratively no matter where they are. On a shared project, such as a group presentation, multiple students can work on it at the same time from different computers and can chat with one another. If there is a question or students

would like an opinion from Clifton, he can also step in to chat and view the work.

“I'm excited about [Google Apps for Education] because students love it; it's easy to do, it's free,” Clifton said, adding in the future he didn't foresee the schools continuing to pay for Microsoft Office.

“I find it invaluable,” he furthered. “Using Google Apps for Education gives me the opportunity to showcase my students' abilities in many different mediums.”

* * *

Lastly, Lauren Fierman, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment at RHAM talked to the board about the homework philosophy at the school.

“We want to make sure the purpose of all assignments is to advance student learning,” Fierman stated, “not to jump through hoops or engage in a practice half the class needs and half doesn't because it's easier that way.”

Fierman furthered homework should be “matched to specific learning needs” and “tied into what needs to be done in school the next day.”

She added a student's final grade should reflect their mastery of a concept, “not the completion of tasks.”

“It's not that we don't want evidence somewhere, but completing [homework] is not the same as understanding algebra, photosynthesis, et cetera,” she stated.

Fierman added it didn't make sense for a student to complete all their homework but not fully comprehend the concept and get a good grade, nor for a student to fully comprehend the concept but get a poor grade because they didn't do all their homework.

Fierman said the possibility of reporting grades in a different way was being examined, “So that we're holding the students accountable and reporting whether they did their work, but we're averaging in whether or not they understand the material.”

After the discussion, an updated homework policy Fierman proposed for the high school was forwarded to the Programs Committee for review.

* * *

The next regular RHAM Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 15, at 6:30 p.m. During that meeting, AHM will present the results of the Alcohol and Drug Use survey conducted at the school.

Bacon Academy Seniors Experience Future Jobs

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Seniors in the Bacon Academy capstone class are piloting a program to further ready them for their careers down the road.

The state is mandating that by 2020, school systems implement a capstone project for high school seniors, in which they would incorporate skills that they've learned during their time in school.

Bacon's capstone class brings students together with a community mentor to experience one of the students' interests.

"I was on a visit to a school in Rhode Island for NEASC [the New England Association of Schools and Colleges]," Garrett Dukette, one of the teachers of the capstone class, said. "They had a cool capstone project. It's coming down the pike."

This year's seventh-graders, the class of 2020, will be the first to have a capstone class mandated, but Dukette said the school wanted to do it the right way, the "Colchester way."

Having been planning the class all of last year with a team of 10 teachers, the class began this school year with 26 seniors.

"The nuts-and-bolts end of it is that the students find a community mentor and do 20 hours or more of internship," Dukette said. "They do a research paper in a related area and then a final presentation in front of a panel."

Dubbed a "thesis in action" by Dukette, the

experience allows students to get a feel for what they may want to major in for college or do after graduation as a job.

Senior Matt Thoms is currently interning with an eighth-grade English teacher at William J. Johnston Middle School.

"I observe, talk with the kids and graded and made up a quiz," Thoms said. "Hopefully I'll get to teach a class with her."

Thoms, who wants to eventually become a teacher, said it's been nice to experience the classroom environment now rather than later.

"I can see it now rather than waiting in college and spending so much money only to change my mind," Thoms said.

Senior Kylie Frink actually split up her internship between two mentors; one is a professor at the University of Connecticut in political science and the other is a man from Washington D.C. involved in analyzing terrorists' psychology to hopefully prevent a future attack.

"It translates into international relations and crisis management," Frink said. Along with attending a conference with the UConn professor in Boston, Frink Skypes with her mentor in D.C.

"We're getting a step ahead," Frink said. "We can apply to schools based on their programs, not just as undecided."

Frink also said it feels like "going to work."

Co-teacher Julia Jones said the students are working in a variety of fields, including volunteering for a skilled nursing facility, shadowing an information technology person, working on high voltage lines for CL&P, shadowing a counselor, doing web design, working with a physical therapist, shadowing in the hospital industry, landscaping, chemistry and even golf course management.

"They can tease out their major, what it would be like," Jones said.

Dukette said the school system is moving forward with the pilot program and although budget issues limited Bacon to only one class this year, the teachers hope to increase it to at least two classes next year.

One of the issues the program currently has is that the students are responsible for their transportation. Although they are sharing rides and things worked out this year, Jones said approximately "25 percent of the class doesn't have their licenses." This may result in the program incurring a small transportation cost, Dukette said.

The other bigger issue, Dukette said, is the need to develop community connections for the students to mentor with.

"Many internships are for undergraduates,

not high school students," Frink said. "You have to figure out how to approach mentors."

"There are not an unlimited number of businesses in Colchester," Dukette said. "We hope down the road there will be some positive relationships between the school and community. We want to break down the stereotype of high school students. The community should see what they have to offer."

Jones said the feedback from this year's mentors have been great with the mentors being impressed by the students.

"The plan right now is how to embed [the program]," Dukette said. "We want to see it in the classroom."

Although the state requirement for the 2020 graduates does not explicitly state what the capstone should be, Dukette said he and his fellow teachers are trying to give the kids an "authentic experience."

"The more the town embraces the program, the more the kids get out of it," Dukette said.

Along with community connections for mentors, the class is looking for more people to come in and talk to the kids about their different jobs and experiences ranging in all walks of life. Interested residents can contact Dukette at gdukette@colchesterct.org or Jones at jjones15@colchesterct.org.

Council Plans January Public Meeting on East Hampton Town Facilities

by John Tyczkowski

At a meeting held last Thursday, Nov. 13, the Town Council resolved to plan a public meeting early next year, tentatively scheduled for Jan. 6, which would allow town residents to become more actively involved in deciding how to handle the problem of aging town buildings.

"We need to explain to them all we know about the facilities, and then we need to have them tell us what they want," Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore said. "We need to know more clearly and directly what they're thinking."

At the same meeting, the council unanimously voted to accept the facilities committee's report submitted to them the week before, but only in the sense that it had physically received it.

As stressed by councilor Ted Hintz Jr., council members did not indicate officially if they agreed or disagreed with the report's recommendations.

Council Vice Chair Kevin Reich agreed with Moore that the meeting should be held.

"The community needs to be actively involved in this project for its success," he said. "We really need to know what they're thinking. They're the ones who are going to have to ultimately approve this."

At Reich's suggestion, the council then discussed making the report available for the town to read on the town website. Hintz said he ob-

jected to the town posting that report because it might give the appearance of an endorsement.

"If we're just going to post the facilities report that the council has not agreed with or approved of, I'm absolutely against that," he said. "I absolutely disagree with having that report broadcasted out in the public media as a be-all end-all."

However, the council reached a compromise; Hintz suggested the town post the 2008 Friar & Associates facilities report alongside this year's report, and councilors agreed.

"I'd like to have the Friar Report out there. I'd like to have all of the reports out on the website and made available," Reich said. "I think it's incumbent on us to do more than what has been done to date to get the information out there."

"The whole purpose of that report was as a starting point," councilor George Pfaffenbach, who was a member of the facilities committee, said. "We need to do something. It's very obvious there are a lot of things to be done, and we need the opinion of the people to help establish the path forward."

Councilor Phillip Visintainer said that, while he didn't agree with the report, town residents needed to have the chance to look over it for themselves.

"Their opinions are crucial to this effort," he said. "There's no sense in keeping anything

back; we've got to put it all out there."

However, councilor Patience Anderson said she was particularly concerned with having an accurate picture of the proposed projects' financial impacts to present to the town.

"We can talk theories and say, 'It'd be nice to have a pretty building here,' but what is it going to cost? What is it going to mean for our pocketbooks?" she said. "That's all they want to know."

Visintainer and councilor Mark Philhower said they agreed with Anderson.

"We're going to need more precise figures on some of these options, as well as what some alternatives may be for them," Visintainer said. "That's where we have to start."

However, Pfaffenbach told them the exact numbers would have to wait until after the town decided which priorities to tackle.

"We've got to know what we're going to build, and where we're going to build it first, before we can price it," he said. "A lot of things are going to need to get done, and they're not all going to get done overnight."

The council decided to post both the recent facilities committee report as well as the Friar Report on the town website, www.easthamptonct.org.

* * *

The council also voted to unanimously set into motion a mutual aid agreement between

East Hampton and Middletown police regarding private duty assignments, discussed at the council's last meeting.

"This is a pretty simple agreement that just puts into writing a past practice that we have with several surrounding communities," East Hampton Police Chief Sean Cox said. "We have several large projects in our not-too-distant future that are clearly going to exhaust our supply of personnel."

The agreement itself said that if Middletown police perform private duty assignments in town, such as monitoring traffic at road construction sites, their police department would handle those officers' billing. The reverse would be true for East Hampton police providing private duty assistance in Middletown.

Cox also recommended that this formal, written agreement be adopted between East Hampton and all of the other towns it has mutual assistance agreements with, such as Portland and Cromwell.

Several upcoming projects that could benefit from this aid agreement include work on the routes 66 and 196 interchange next summer and the natural gas line construction project set to begin in the spring.

* * *

The next regular Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 25, at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room.

Bomb Threat at East Hampton High School

by John Tyczkowski

Students evacuated East Hampton High School Monday afternoon after a bomb threat was made.

Around 1 p.m., according to police, a school employee received an "anonymous electronic correspondence" which indicated there was a bomb in the building. The school evacuated students, and East Hampton Police responded to the scene.

The Connecticut State Police Emergency Services Unit, including the bomb squad, also aided in the investigation, at East Hampton Police's request.

Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas

said that the high school followed district procedures in evacuating the students when the threat was received, and that the threat was fortunately "unfounded."

"Following our procedures assured our students' safety," she said.

The investigation is still ongoing at this time, police said. Anyone with information that could lead to the identification of the person who made the bomb threat is asked to call East Hampton police at 860-267-9922.

Individuals can also call police anonymously at 860-267-9066, police said.

Portland School Board Trims Business Manager's Salary

by John Tyczkowski

This week brought a major step forward in the ongoing action regarding the Portland Board of Education's business manager position.

At its meeting on Wednesday, the Board of Selectmen discussed the Board of Education's Monday vote that scaled back the business manager's salary, as well as the manager's responsibilities listed in the position's job description.

The Board of Education created the business manager position in June 2013 out of the then-current business assistant position. The board then awarded the business manager two raises, a \$20,000 raise in August 2013, and a \$20,000 raise in August 2014.

This fall, in the wake of the second raise, selectmen and town residents brought questions about the amount of the raise for a single employee. They also brought concerns about the transparency of the job positing and hiring process, since the position was not opened to external candidates.

Selectman Ryan Curley, the liaison to the Board of Education, said the school board on Monday agreed to reduce the business manager's salary to \$82,000, which subtracted the second \$20,000 raise and included a standard 2.5 percent raise all administrative town employees received. Some supervisory duties were removed from the position, and the vote was unanimous.

Board of Education member Andrea Alfano was on hand to provide further information on the vote. She pointed out that the June 2013 vote to create the business manager position with a salary of \$80,000 was unanimous – and that much of the decision was guided by advice from then-schools superintendent Sally Doyen.

"I do in retrospect think that there may have been flags for some people at that time, but we had a superintendent for nine years that guided us and most times gave us good guidance,"

Alfano said. "But maybe not that time."

She also reaffirmed the board's commitment moving forward to not repeat their actions.

"I think we've all said 'Shame on us' and we've acknowledge maybe we didn't do the right thing back there, and I think we've made a commitment to the town that we're not going to do that again," Alfano said. "[Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly] also has a true commitment that this will never happen under his watch."

"We went back, we listened and we had conversations," she said. "I'm happy we were able to make this work. I think this was the best solution we could probably do at this point."

Alfano also acknowledged the "importance of the relationship between the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen," as First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield spoke favorably about the new open communication between both boards.

"Thanks for coming to our meetings and for Ryan going to your meetings," Bransfield said. "I think we're moving forward, and I appreciate your dialogue with us."

Also at the selectmen's meeting, Bransfield also read from a letter from Bernie Dillon, announcing her resignation as town clerk effective Jan. 1, 2015.

Dillon has served in that capacity for the past 37 years.

"My decision was not an easy one, but my husband's recent health issues require I retire at this time rather than at the end of my term," Bransfield read. "I have enjoyed every minute of my 37 years serving the town."

"The people of Portland and my coworkers through the years at the town hall have been like family to me, and I will miss everyone," she read.

In a fashion true to her character, Bransfield said as selectmen nodded in acknowledgement,

the letter was simply signed "Bernie."

"This is a very touching letter for me. I've worked with Bernie for many years, not just as first selectman but also as a citizen of the town," she said. "I'm also so proud of all the work that she's doing for the town in the 37 years, and all the other work that she's done in our town. She's a marvelous person."

Bransfield said the town had plans in store to celebrate Dillon's career and legacy in town as she retires, and called for a round of applause, which selectmen and those in attendance alike joined in.

The board briefly revisited the topic of water and sewer rates which they discussed with members of the Water and Sewer commission at the last meeting two weeks ago.

At the Nov. 5 meeting, commission chair Dick Cote said the water and sewer services in town are running a significant deficit in the range of \$600,000, and that it is growing by around \$2,000 to \$3,000 a week. He said the town's long-time undercharging of rates was a critical factor in the deficit.

The town serves approximately 1,500 sewer customers and 2,300 water customers.

Also at the previous meeting, commission member Norman Ward recommended the board increase rates by at least 5-6 percent to begin to tackle the deficit.

The board took no action at that time but agreed to study the issue and develop courses of action to discuss the following month.

Bransfield said she put a freeze on all expenditures for water and sewer work and would be working with Public Works Director Rick Kelsey to monitor other expenditures.

"Salaries, electricity, gasoline, oil, that all will be paid for without special permission," she said. "But for other discretionary funds, we're going to be watching every dollar. We're going to be as careful as we can."

Portland Historical Society Celebrates 300th Anniversary of Home

by John Tyczkowski

The Waverly Center was the nexus last weekend for a celebration of, and talk about, the White-Overton-Callander House, which just turned 300 years old this year.

Fifteen people, including First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and Deputy First Selectwoman Kathy Richards, turned out Sunday afternoon for an in-depth discussion of the house's history, its significance within the town and some interesting stories about its various owners.

And, in true birthday party fashion, there was plenty of cake, ice cream and punch to go around.

After settling in, Claire Frisbie, a Portland Historical Society director, gave a 45-minute talk on the house's history with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

John White first came from England to the colonies in 1632 with his family. Eventually, they joined Thomas Hooker and settled in Hartford around 1636. His son, Captain Nathaniel White, moved in 1651 to what would become Middletown.

White quickly became a prominent citizen in his community, and became very politically active. In fact, he was elected to the General Assembly 85 times and held office for over 50 years.

In the 1690s, White bought up land across the river in what would become Portland. At the time, the community had only a handful of residents, since settlement had only just begun under James Stancliff in 1686.

When White died in 1711, he gave the land he had purchased to his grandson, also named Nathaniel White. The junior White then began constructing a house on what is now Main Street, and finished by 1714. The house was constructed in the popular Colonial saltbox style with a very steep back.

It was also around that time that the General Assembly granted the community parish rights as the settlement of East Middletown, since they had raised a meetinghouse.

When the junior White died in 1743, he deeded his property and the house to his son, Noadiah White. White made a few changes to

the house, such as installing corner cupboards and adding wood paneling inside, both probably during the 1750s.

It was during this period that the house's ownership history began to get a bit complicated.

Noadiah White left Chatham – which Portland was a part of at the time – for Middlefield, N.Y., in 1786, and left his house and farm to his sons. They worked the farm until 1796, when they decided to leave Connecticut for Vermont. At that time, the house then passed to their sister, Mehitable, who was married to General Seth Overton.

Overton was a privateer and specialized in procurement during the American Revolution. His military title came later from his service in the Connecticut militia, in the early 1800s. He also farmed tobacco, and he was a federally-contracted shipbuilder.

In 1799, the 548-ton, 26-gun sloop of war *U.S.S. Connecticut*, built in Chatham and crewed by 180, was pressed into service with the fledgling U.S. Navy against the French.

The *Connecticut* enjoyed an illustrious wartime reputation for speed, and was classed as a frigate. She took part in a number of successful missions against the French, which included destroying enemy vessels and recovering captured ships.

However, she was sold off to private interests in 1801 when Congress downsized the Navy, and was later unceremoniously scrapped in 1808 after being deemed not seaworthy.

Back in Chatham, Overton decided to add a kitchen wing to his house and sold it to his son Augustin Overton shortly before his death in 1811. Augustin, a farmer, chose to build a new house at 496 Main St., and kept the White-Overton House as a home for two of his aunts.

In 1840, Augustin gifted the White-Overton House to his wife, Almira Goodrich, who subsequently passed the home along to her children in 1853. The home stayed in the family until 1907, when the last of her children died.

After 193 years of family ownership, the White-Overton House went through a short but tumultuous period of varied ownership among several families until 1918 when the Ryans



One of the oldest houses in Portland, with a history spanning three centuries, sits at 492 Main St overlooking the Connecticut River. The White-Overton-Callander House was added to the National Register of Historic Places this year after a two-year application process.

bought the house as a vacation home. In 1931, the Ryans deeded the house to their daughter Ruth and her husband, John Callendar.

During the 1930s, the Callanders added on a large, multi-level sleeping porch to the back of the house, as at the time it was a popular tuberculosis remedy to sleep in the night air. They also added a lot of Colonial Revival-style architectural flourishes to the house during that time.

Around 1960, the Callanders added on a porch to the house, and cut back on some of the expansions that had been added on over the years. Then, in 1970, the family got rid of the sleeping porch and put in a more traditional house porch.

In 1997, the Portland Historical Society received the house, after Ruth left it to them in her will. The society set to work restoring the house and reopened it as a museum building in 2003, in time for what would have been Ruth's

101st birthday. For next month's financial meeting, she also encouraged selectmen to consider "at least a 6-8 percent increase" in water usage rates, "modestly increasing" the base rates for water and sewers and a general fee for maintaining public fire hydrants.

Bransfield also said the board should be prepared to review and discuss other general water and sewer fees at the next meeting, including sprinkler system checks and for transporting sewage to the sewage treatment plant.

Also Wednesday, the board announced a plan to celebrate Portland Public Schools for its recent scholastic and athletic achievements.

Selectmen agreed by consensus to spend about \$575 from the contingency fund to pay for a large banner to hang over Main Street.

"We know that our middle school is a Blue Ribbon School; that's in addition to Brownstone Intermediate, and we congratulate them on that," Bransfield said.

She also acknowledged the town's sports achievements as well.

"Our soccer team won the state championship last fall, our baseball team won the state championship in the spring and this fall, the cross country girls won their championship, and the girls soccer team won the state championship again," she said.

Bransfield said she originally wanted to have a parade in town, but that "logistically it wasn't going to work," at this time, though she promised, "That's not to say we can't at some point."

"We should celebrate Portland schools not just for their recent achievements, but also because they're wonderful schools," she said.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will take place Wednesday, Dec. 3, at 7:30 p.m., in the Mary Flood Room of the Portland Public Library.

101st birthday.

Another round of restorations followed from 2012-14, which included replacing the 300-year old handmade brick in the chimney, as well as checking on structural soundness of the house's foundation and main beams.

It was at this time that the society began the process of nominating the White-Overton-Callander House for a spot on the National Register of Historic Places. After a bureaucratic snag during the process, the house officially received its designation in May 2014.

"We are now official, and hopefully some day we can afford to buy one of those brass plaques and put it on the house," Frisbie said. "That's our next step."

The White-Overton-Callander House anniversary and NHRP listing are two events leading up to the town's celebration of its 175th anniversary in 2016.

Steep Climb for Economic Aid Grant Application in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

With its deadline fast approaching, the Town Council edged closer this week toward a decision on what to fund with state money, but reached no consensus.

Tuesday evening's special meeting of the council, which included members of the Conservation-Lake Commission and the Friends of Lake Pocotopaug, was called Monday night in the wake of Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant difficulties at a meeting last Thursday, Nov. 13.

Last week, Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore said council members would be feeling a little extra pressure this year, since they were caught unaware that STEAP grant applications would come due on Nov. 28, rather than in early spring as in previous years.

George Knoecklein of Mansfield-based NorthEast Aquatic Research, the town's limnologist (lake scientist), wrote a letter to the council Thursday detailing his proposal for the use of the \$500,000 STEAP grant.

The proposal included spending \$180,000 on a hydrologic assessment of all the channels that flow into the lake, \$120,000 on collecting data on the internal loading of phosphorous and \$200,000 on a five-year lake and watershed monitoring program.

When read at the meeting, the proposal faced steep opposition from councilor Ted Hintz Jr. due to what he said was the proposal's focus on studying, rather than doing.

Some lake proposals floated among councilors included putting in curbs on roads around the lake, revamping the lake's drainage systems with additional infiltration catch basins, instituting some public education programs or for signage around town that would clearly mark lake watershed boundaries.

This week, the meeting began with several residents expressing their pro-lake beliefs during the public comment section.

Marty Podskoch, a resident with three properties on the lake, as well as a member of the Friends of Lake Pocotopaug (FoLP) and the Conservation-Lake Commission, said it was crucial for the town to use the STEAP grant for cleaning up the lake.

"If the lake isn't cleaned up, the value of my

property and all the other lakefront property will be down, taxes will be down and our children – my grandchildren – will be unable to swim in it," he said. "We've got to stop the flow of nutrients into the lake. I would urge you to do everything in your power to put this as your number one priority."

John Moore, chairman of FoLP, insisted that the buck had been passed too many times in the past and now was especially time to act, citing how the lake was closed on Memorial and Labor Day weekends due to algae blooms.

"I would feel ashamed if I was the one directing these issues – or neglecting these issues – that those two weekends were not available to the people who voted you into office," he said. "The Friends of the Lake are fully supporting the Lake Commission and the proposal from NorthEast Aquatic Research in order to move forward and start making changes to the lake for the benefit of the town."

Knoecklein, who had just returned from a limnology-related conference in Florida, was on hand to explain the details of his proposal to the council, as well as to further explain the reasons behind the need for more study of the lake.

Essentially, he said that in order to determine the correct treatment for the lake that would be sure to attack the root causes effectively, he would need more consistent, up-to-date data that takes into account water volumes, which previous studies had not considered.

"You really don't have the luxury to do things willy-nilly because you need to do something," he said. "You have to have a good estimate of what you're dealing with. And you have to have a lot of data for that."

In addition, Knoecklein mentioned that there needs to be a stable, long-term monitoring program in place to gather data and to make recommendations to the town council based upon that data. Then, the council could take action analyzing the results which would lead to further recommendations and further action.

"In order to fix the lake, you have to know where you are now, and you have to be able to track that over time to determine whether you're successful or not," he said. "If you don't have

detailed, on-going monitoring, you don't know whether your fixes are working."

"A lake is a dynamic system," he said. "It's constantly changing over time and is never the same; it's not like fixing a roof."

Discussion soon turned to figuring out how exactly to pay for these proposals, and how to efficiently use the STEAP money.

Town Council Vice Chairman Kevin Reich brought up the idea of splitting the STEAP grant into multiple parts, and using the grant to fund several short-term lake solutions instead of a few long-term ones.

Councilor Mark Philhower echoed that idea, speaking about a phased plan for the lake that would use multiple STEAP grants over a period of several years, because of the ultimately high costs of cleaning up the lake and watershed work, which Knoecklein estimated might total around \$50 million.

"We need to do things incrementally. ... We're not going to get \$50 million donated to us," Philhower said. "We need to come up with a plan we can handle, step by step."

However, Hintz said he would prefer to spend money on concrete action, and made clear his opposition to spending STEAP grant money on further studies.

"It's the fact that this proposal is all study-related, and there's nothing about actually doing anything," he said. "If that's all it is, then I'm sorry, I can't support any more studying. This town has spent so much money on investigating and then doing nothing with it."

Despite that, Knoecklein made it clear that he would need more data to come up with an effective approach to the watershed's problems.

"We've been collecting watershed data, and that data doesn't match up with any of the data we have in that big pile from previous consulting firms," he said. "This is how science works; if I can't duplicate what was done prior to me, I can't uphold the recommendations that they made."

However, Knoecklein said the lake data, collected by volunteers over six years, was "excellent," and confirmed that the lake's problem status has not changed.

After reaching a deadlock on lake matters after an hour of discussion, the council turned to discussing alternative projects for STEAP grant funding.

One suggestion included constructing a public works garage.

"We currently have no place to garage any of our public works vehicles," Hintz said of the garage, which would encompass a metal exterior and gravel bedding. "We should go and try to get something that would protect our vehicles."

Estimates thrown around the meeting regarding the garage's cost were all in the \$200,000 ballpark.

Councilors also discussed using STEAP grant money to convert boilers in town buildings to gas, which Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said would get funded "pretty fast" due to the governor's plan for natural gas expansion.

Another STEAP-funded project could include testing for sewer leaks which might be letting contaminants into the lake, after councilor George Pfaffenbach, a volunteer lake tester in the past, related a story about how water from the bottom of the lake "smelled like sewage" when pulled up for sampling.

Philhower expressed interested in that course of action.

"It'd be a shame if we're spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on the lake when it's just a matter of fixing a pipe," he said.

However, councilors also discussed using town budget money savings that would come from using STEAP funding for boiler conversion to aid in lake efforts.

Moore said the council is set to vote on what to apply for at their meeting next Tuesday, and the grant application is due in Hartford the next day.

"We have to do a temporary application first, and then submit the full one later," she said. "But we'll get it done."

* * *

The next Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 25, at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room.

East Hampton Police News

11/2: Ryan Holznagel, 27, of 17 Flatbrook Rd., was arrested and charged with possession of heroin and possession of drug paraphernalia, East Hampton Police said.

11/5: A 15-year-old juvenile of East Hampton was issued a summons for sixth-degree larceny, possession of electronic cigarettes, possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

11/8: Bradley Grant Everett, 28, who police said they had no certain address for, was arrested and charged with possession of heroin and possession of marijuana, police said.

11/8: Robert Demonte Jr., 42, of 13 Oak Knoll Rd., was issued a summons for operat-

ing an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

11/9: Daniel B. Barton, 29, of 121 Ague Spring Rd., Haddam Neck was involved in a one-car motor vehicle accident on Clark Hill Road, at its intersection with Stonegate Road, police said. Barton was arrested for DUI, failure to drive right, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, police said.

11/13: Jason Canterbury, 31, of 5 Bellevue St., East Hampton was issued a summons for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating a motor vehicle while under suspension, police said.

Colchester Police News

11/12: State Police said Gregory Bader, 20, of 310 Balaban Rd., was arrested and charged with violation of a protective order, disorderly conduct, second-degree strangulation and third-degree assault.

11/13: State Police said Joseph Curran, 35, of 116 Crary Rd., Griswold, was arrested and charged with failure to appear. Police said he was also charged with possession of a controlled substance and a second count of failure to appear. Police also said they charged him with two counts of third-degree robbery and two counts of sixth-degree larceny, due to his alleged involvement in a robbery in Salem earlier in the day.

11/13: State Police said Shay Stamat, 27, of 63 Podurgiel Lane, Montville, was arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit third-de-

gree robbery, sixth-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit sixth-degree larceny and operating under suspension.

11/14: State Police said Carlos Cruz, 40, of 11 Birch Circle, was arrested and charged with two counts of risk of injury to a child, one count of disorderly conduct, and one count of third-degree assault.

11/16: State Police said Richard Miller, 54, of 1539 Portland Cobalt Rd., Portland, was arrested and charged with operating under the influence, failure to drive in the proper lane and failure to notify change of address.

11/17: State Police said Sarah Peckham, 41, of 30 Babcock Rd, East Haddam, was arrested and charged with third-degree burglary, illegal use of a credit card, third-degree forgery and third-degree larceny.

Marlborough Police News

11/13: State Police said. George Granger, 26, of 30 Kenney St., Bristol, was arrested and charged with DWI, reckless driving and expired insurance.

11/16: State Police said Marisa Haggett, 22, of 35 Blish Rd., was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

11/16: State Police said Pedro Sandoval, 35, of 9522 107th St., Ozone Park, N.Y., was arrested and charged with reckless driving.

11/16: State Police said Keri Golias, 36, of 2408 Linwood Cemetery Rd., Colchester, was arrested and charged with operating under suspension, evading, and unsafe lane change.

Andover Police News

11/11: State Police said they are investigating after someone broke into the upper clubhouse building on Nov. 10 at the Andover Sportsman's Club. Anyone with information should call Resident Trooper Rob O'Connor at 860-742-0235.

Obituaries

Colchester

George F. Miller

George F. Miller, 85, of Colchester, passed away Sunday, Nov. 9, in Keene, NH. He was born Sept. 17, 1929, to the late George and Ruth (Fargo) Miller.

George is survived by his sisters, Martha Pearl, Peggy Turner and Lorna Miller; children, George Miller, Peggy Perham, Gloria Schweizer, Allyn Miller, Richard Miller and stepchildren John Rutchick, Charlie Rutchick, George O'Neil and Barbara O'Neil; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

He is predeceased by his sisters, Ruth Howard, Betty Brothers, Nancy Miller and brothers, Alvin (Punky) Miller, Allyn Miller, Thomas Miller and Joey Miller, as well as his daughter, Georgia Miller Smith and son Vincent Miller.

George worked for Savin Brothers as a heavy equipment operator in the construction of Route 2. He also was a truck driver. George is known for his love of pulling ponies and horses. Over the years he has won many competitions/championships, of which he may still hold some of the records. George's love for pulling ponies has continued on to his children and grandchildren who can be seen at the local fairs pulling ponies to this day.

George will be missed by all who loved him.

There will be a graveside service at the convenience of the family.

Colchester

Elizabeth Ann Courtenay

Elizabeth Ann Courtenay, "Betty," 86, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Saturday, Nov. 15, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Oct. 17, 1928, in The Bronx, N.Y., she was a daughter of the late Daniel and Mary O'Donnell.

Betty was a longtime resident of Long Island, N.Y. but has called Colchester her home for the past 14 years. She loved her town and was very active in the Colchester Senior Center, where she enjoyed singing with the Golden Glows, competing in *Wii Bowling* tournaments and line dancing with her friends.

Widow of the late Michael D., Sr., she leaves five children and their spouses, Betty and John Brgant, Kathy and Bob Koebler, Mickey (Jr.) and Marie, Danny and Kathy and Joanne and Curt Clarke; numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren; a brother, Peter O'Donnell of Long Island, N.Y.; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her parents and her husband, she was predeceased by a daughter, Mary Ellen Fedler; and four siblings.

Betty carried herself through this life with much dignity and grace and will be sorely missed by those who had the privilege of knowing her.

The Memorial Liturgy was celebrated Wednesday, Nov. 19, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. There were no calling hours and burial was private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Anita R. Reguin

Anita R. Reguin, 78, of Colchester, formerly of Baltic, died Sunday morning, Nov. 16, at the Backus Hospital. She was born in Wauregan May 8, 1936, the daughter of the late Leon J. and Aurora (Baillargeon) Brodeur.

Anita dedicated her life as a homemaker for her family. She was a communicant of St. Mary's Church in Baltic. She was president of the Sprague Smilers and queen of the Red Hat Society. On April 14, 1956, she married Norman C. Reguin at Sacred Heart Church in Wauregan, who survives her.

Besides her husband, she is survived by two sons, Carl Reguin of Colchester and Patrick Reguin of Helena, Mont., and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by two sons, Kenneth and Gregory Reguin.

A memorial Mass was celebrated Wednesday, Nov. 19, at St. Mary's Church in Baltic, meeting directly at the church. Burial was at the convenience of the family. There were no calling hours.

Guillot Funeral Home, 75 South B. St., Taftville, is in charge of arrangements.

Portland

Jack R. Foster

Jack R. Foster, 85, of Portland, and Naples, Fla., husband of Elizabeth (Amicone) Foster, ran his last race and passed away Monday, Nov. 17. He was the son of the late Richard and Myrtle (Stark) Foster.

Born Aug. 2, 1929, in Buffalo, N.Y., Jack graduated from Hamburg High School in Hamburg, N.Y. He served in the United States Army in Germany. He received his bachelors and masters degrees from SUNY-Buffalo. Jack went on to earn his doctorate degree at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

In 1967, he became a professor of history at Southern Connecticut State University where he was an educator until 1992. While at Southern, Jack successfully coached Women's Cross Country and assisted Women's Track and Field. Jack was known as "Doc" to his runners. He received the Coach of the Year Award numerous times throughout his coaching career.

Jack was an avid runner and completed several Boston Marathons. He was inducted into the SUNY-Buffalo, Athletic Hall of Fame and the Hamburg High School Wall of Fame in Hamburg, N.Y. In Cheshire, Jack was elected and served as a Democratic councilman for many years. He resided at Cape Cod in the summer and Naples, Fla., in the winter where he was able to golf, bowl and play bocce. Jack and Liz moved to Portland in 2004. Jack was a fan of the Red Sox, Patriots and Buffalo Bills.

Besides his devoted wife, Elizabeth, of 58 years, he leaves his daughters Karen Foster (Gene Wilson), Nancy Roy (James) and son Jay (Jenn). He was grandfather to Ryan and Margaret Hughes, Alyssa, Haley and Abigail Foster.

He also leaves his sister Lynn Muldoon (Danny) of N. Tonawanda, N.Y.

Relatives and friends called Thursday, Nov. 20, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Funeral services will be held today, Nov. 21, with a Mass at 11 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary on Freestone Avenue, Portland, with a reception to follow in the church hall. Burial will be private.

The family gives a special thanks to the staff at Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center.

In lieu of flowers a donation may be made to Southern Connecticut State University-Athletics at southernct.edu/athletics.

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

Andover

Thomas M. Moynihan

Thomas M. Moynihan, 60, died Tuesday, Nov. 11, at Manchester Memorial Hospital, after a hard-fought battle with cancer. He was a dedicated employee at Andover Elementary School for over 20 years and was loved by all.

He was born in Hartford, June 2, 1954, son of the late Jeremiah Moynihan and Dorothy (Pierce) Moynihan of Storrs.

Tom was raised in Coventry and lived most of his life in Andover before moving to Manchester six years ago.

With his mother, Tom is survived by his wife of 40 years, Denise (Jones) Moynihan; and three children, Jon, Scott and Julie Moynihan, who made him extremely proud. He also is survived by his daughter-in-law, Scott's wife, Sarah; his only grandchild, Grady; and many other close family and friends.

His battle with cancer was made easier with the generous and loving support from the nurses at the DeQuattro Cancer Center.

Relatives and friends are welcome to share in a celebration of Tom's life Saturday, Nov. 22, at 10 a.m., at First Congregational Church of Coventry, 1171 Main St. (Route 31), Coventry, with burial to follow in New Coventry Cemetery. Visiting hours are today, Nov. 21, from 4-7 p.m. at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester.

Memorial contributions may be made to the ECHN Foundation (DeQuattro Community Cancer Center), 71 Haynes St., Manchester, CT 06040-4131.

To leave a message for his family, visit holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.



Amston

Marcus A. Atkinson Sr.

Marcus A. Atkinson Sr., 89, of West Main Street, Amston, widower of the late Jeannine E. (Dumond) Atkinson, passed away Tuesday afternoon, Nov. 18, surrounded by his loving family. Born Jan. 4, 1925, in Havana, Fla., he was the son of the late William and Mary (Brundyge) Atkinson.



He was a proud Navy veteran, serving during World War II. Following his honorable discharge at the rank of Seaman First Class in May of 1946, he wed the love of his life, Jeannine on Nov. 4, 1947 in Lille, Maine. They shared nearly 58 years of marriage before she predeceased him on Oct. 24, 2005.

He worked at Pratt & Whitney for many years. Together with his wife, Mr. Atkinson owned and operated both the L&M Donut Shop in Amston as well as a salvage business before their retirement. In years past, he had served on the Board of Selectmen in Hebron and had been active with the Hebron Lions. An avid outdoorsman, Mr. Atkinson was a founding member of the Hebron Sportsmen's Club.

He leaves three children, M. Linda Rose and her husband, Charles of South Windsor, Marcus Jr. of Kensington and Steve of Norwich; nine grandchildren; many great grandchildren; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his beloved wife, he was predeceased by a daughter-in-law, Christine.

Friends may call 4-7 p.m. today, Nov. 21, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral will assemble at the funeral home starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 22, before a chapel service at 9:30 a.m. Committal with full military honors will follow in the New Hebron Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, 238 West Town St. Norwich, CT 06360.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Andover

Shirley Ann Williams

Shirley Ann (Bray) Williams, 78, of Andover, formerly of Coventry, beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt and friend, died Saturday, Nov. 15, with her family at her side.

Shirley was born Nov. 7, 1936, in Manchester, daughter of the late Albert F. and Victoria J. Bray. She resided in Coventry for several years before moving to Andover in 1963. Prior to her retirement, she was employed by the State of Connecticut as a Head Chef at Mansfield Training School and Windham High School.

Shirley leaves us with her love and strength – a life fulfilled with an independent nature. The heart of a farmer, she enjoyed cooking, canning, sewing, gardening, braiding rugs, knitting, crocheting and crafts with her girls. She traveled to many parts of the country. She loved watching NASCAR races, UConn basketball games, bird-watching, her cats, finding new recipes, word jumbles and playing cards in her cozy home. She especially loved visits by her family and friends.

Shirley said, "I talk to My Lord" and now she is safe in God's love.

She is survived by her three daughters and sons-in-law, Donna Lee and Mike Porter of Hebron, Robin and Bruce Bergeron of Coventry and Cheryl and Timothy Christensen of Vernon; her four loving grandchildren, Michael Bergeron and his wife, Nora and their daughter Michaela, Ashley Bergeron, Jamie Lynn Christensen D'Amato and her husband, Marc D'Amato, and Timothy Christensen Jr. Shirley also leaves her brother, Albert Bray and his wife Audrey of Coventry, her two sisters-in-law, Marianne Bray of Manchester and Merlene "Weesie" Bray of Willington, several nieces, nephews and her long-time friend, Richard LaFlesh Jr. of Andover.

In addition to her parents, Shirley was predeceased by her two brothers, William F. Bray and Dr. Robert L. Bray DDS.

Services and burial at East Cemetery, Manchester, will be private. There are no calling hours.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Humane Society of Connecticut, 701 Russell Road, Newington, CT 06111.

To leave an online condolence, visit holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Colchester

Bruce A. Newcomb

Bruce A. Newcomb, 70, of Colchester, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 18, at Backus Hospital. He was the son of the late Lowell (Bud) and Elizabeth (McVane) Newcomb.

He is survived by his children, Bryon Newcomb and wife Shannon of Auburn, Maine, and Christina Ann Hodge of Gorham, Maine; four grandchildren, Liam and Karis Newcomb of Auburn, Maine, and Anthony and Klara Hodge of Gorham, Maine. He is also survived by his beloved sister, Roxanne Barber and her husband Raymond of Bozrah, Cherri Allen and her husband Robert of Norwich and Deborah Lydick and her Husband David of Raymond, Maine; also, four nieces and four nephews.

Bruce was employed for many years as a shoe salesman in Portland, Maine. He later moved to Tarpon Springs, Fla., to enjoy warmer weather, where he was employed at Helen Ellis Hospital in materials management for 10 years. He retired in 2005 and moved to Colchester to be near his sisters. Bruce loved to be a wisecracker and was loved by all.

Belmont Funeral Home is handling arrangements, which will be private.

Hebron

James Kaldy

James Kaldy, 70, of Hebron, died suddenly at his home in Ellenton, Fla., Sunday, Nov. 2.

He leaves his sons James and wife Sheryl and daughter Anna of Oregon and Justin and wife Bridget and their daughters Amber Rose and Isabella of Columbia; also, his beloved aunt Arline Dion of Palmetto, Fla. He will be sadly missed by his fiancée, Victoria Reinholtz, and numerous friends in Connecticut and Florida.

Kicliter Funeral Home in Palmetto, Fla., was in charge of the arrangements.

Portland

Mary Louise Long

Mary Louise (Bartlett) Long of Greenacres, Fla., born Oct. 12, 1928, in Portland, died peacefully Saturday, Oct. 25, after a brief illness and a lifelong fight with diabetes.

Mary Lou was predeceased by her husband, Arthur Francis "Joe" Long Jr.; parents, Henry and Frances Bartlett of Durham.

Mary Lou is survived by her sisters, Frances Nichols of Middletown and Genevieve "Babe" Kelley of North Bennington, Vt.; daughter, Kathleen (Robert) Padfield of Jupiter, Fla.; son, Peter J. Stetson of Storrs; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

She found peace and comfort in her faith, loved gardening, was an avid competitor in many sports and found fulfillment in being a mother, grandparent and homemaker.

There will be a private family memorial service.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Juvenile Diabetes Association.

Portland

Albert Quagliaroli

Albert Quagliaroli, 91, of Portland, died Thursday, Nov. 13, at Apple Healthcare in Watertown. He was born Feb. 26, 1923, in Glastonbury, son of the late Bernardo and Rose (Toscani) Quagliaroli.

He was predeceased by two sisters, Angeline Eccleston (Glastonbury), Yolanda Viglione (Meriden) and a brother David Quagliaroli (Glastonbury).

He is survived by two nephews, Robert Kerr of East Hartford, John Viglione of Watertown, and a brother-in-law, Clifford Eccleston of Glastonbury.

Albert was a U.S. Army Air Corps veteran of World War II. Prior to his retirement 36 years ago, he was employed at Hamilton Standard in an electrical maintenance capacity for 35 years.

The funeral service was held Wednesday, Nov. 19, in the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury. Burial followed with military honors in St. Augustine Cemetery, South Glastonbury. Friends called at the funeral home on Wednesday, prior to the service.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Disabled American Veterans, VA Medical Center, P.O. Box 310909, Newington, CT 06111.

For online condolences, visit mulryanfh.com.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Last week brought us Veterans Day, a day which, as many of you probably know, hasn't always been called Veterans Day.

President Woodrow Wilson declared Nov. 11, 1919, to be Armistice Day, to celebrate the armistice ending World War I going into effect exactly one year earlier. The day was primarily a day set aside to honor the veterans of that war. It was a lovely day – one intended to be marked with parades and public meetings and a brief cessation of all business at 11 a.m.

And so it went, every Nov. 11, until 1954. By that time, World War II had occurred – a war which saw the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in history, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Korean War had recently ceased as well. So, the decision was made to change Armistice Day to honor *all* veterans, not just those of World War I.

To sum it up, the name of the day being celebrated changed, but the date – and, largely, the nature of the celebrations – remained the same.

Next week, though, we celebrate a holiday that has had the same name and purpose since the 1700s, but whose date has wildly varied.

President George Washington, in response to a request from Congress, declared Nov. 26, 1789, a Day of Publick Thanksgiving. (Okay, so they spelled funny in those days.) It was a Thursday, and, indeed, the last Thursday of November, but evidently there was no great attachment to that day. From 1790-1862, there was no set date for the holiday. In fact, some years there was no Thanksgiving at all; it was up to the president each year to declare it, and some presidents just didn't. Thomas Jefferson, for example, didn't declare one his entire eight years in office.

Nor did Thanksgiving have to occur on a Thursday – or even in November. James Madison, perhaps making up for lost time under Jefferson's reign (or perhaps he just really enjoyed turkey) declared the holiday *twice* in 1815. However, neither of those days fell in autumn.

It took President Abraham Lincoln to stop the Turkey Day insanity. In 1863, he declared Thanksgiving to be the last Thursday in November. This definition for determining Thanksgiving was followed for the next 75 years.

However, in 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt – who knew an opportunity to help move the economy along when he saw it – moved Thanksgiving to the second to last Thursday in November, in an effort to extend the Christmas shopping season. If he hadn't done this, the 1939 Thanksgiving would have fallen on the last day of the month, Nov. 30 – rendering the shopping season pretty short.

As a result of this change, though, Thanksgiving could be an early affair – in fact, in 1941, the day fell on Nov. 20. Plus, some states didn't follow the national lead, and this created different Thanksgivings in different states.

So, in late 1941, Congress and President Roosevelt established the fourth Thursday in November as Thanksgiving, beginning in 1942. The tradition hasn't changed since.

* * *

Speaking of tradition, “The Star-Spangled Banner” is always performed at sporting events. And, having attended upwards of 200 baseball games in my lifetime, I thought I'd heard the tune in every way possible. But I never knew there were more words to it I hadn't heard. And, I recently learned, there are; a lot more.

As it turns out, the part everyone knows – the part that starts “Oh say, can you see...” – is just the first verse. The rest are:

On the shore dimly seen through the mists

of the deep,

Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,

What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,

As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?

Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,

In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:

'Tis the star-spangled banner, O! long may it wave

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore

That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,

A home and a country, should leave us no more?

Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.

No refuge could save the hireling and slave

From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:

And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave,

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation.

Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the
Heav'n rescued land

Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!

Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,

And this be our motto: “In God is our trust.”

And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

So.....yeah. A long song! It's probably for the best only the first verse is heard at ballgames. But it's neat to see all the words – and to hear them performed alongside the melody we all know.

By the way, 2014 is the 200th anniversary of Francis Scott Key's writing of the song, which began life as a poem. Key later gave the poem to his brother-in-law, who felt it matched well with the melody of “The Anacreontic Song,” the official song of the Anacreontic Society, an 18th-century gentlemen's club of amateur musicians in London. “The Star-Spangled Banner” gained popularity through the 19th century, and in 1931, President Herbert Hoover signed into law a bill naming it our National Anthem.

* * *

I've made my baseball allegiances quite apparent in this spot over the years (as recently as last week). I haven't been as clear about football, but my team in that sport is the New York Jets. They're making their way through another hapless season, so, as such, it's difficult for me to bust on other teams. But I saw something online Sunday night that really made me chuckle.

The New York Giants' Eli Manning, as some of you may know, had a terrible day on Sunday, throwing no less than five interceptions as the team fell to San Francisco, 16-10. Which led to a friend of mine – who is not a Giants fan – posting on Facebook Sunday night a sign that read:

“If Eli Manning throws a pass in the woods and there's no one there to catch it, does it still get intercepted?”

* * *

See you next week – and happy Thanksgiving.