

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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Volume 38, Number 45

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

February 28, 2014



**Fire Causes Damage...** Fire struck a home on Abbey Road in East Hampton last weekend. No injuries were reported, although the blaze heavily damaged the garage and two cars inside. A story and additional photo appear on page 7. Photo by Jennifer Gasper.

## School Board Pushes for Repurposing

by Elizabeth Bowling

Over the past couple of weeks, the East Hampton Board of Education has urged the Town Council to consider repurposing the Center School building and utilizing it as a new location for the town hall, police station, public works offices and food bank.

Last week, the council and school board took up the subject at a special workshop, where school board members continued to push for the repurposing.

In a letter submitted to the council at its Feb. 11 meeting, Board of Education Chairman Ken Barber wrote that the school board has identified “numerous” reasons why the town should consider the Center School space as a “viable resolution” to its “current space dilemma.”

The letter also mentioned a 2005 feasibility study conducted by Friar Associates, which considered Center School to be “a viable option for renovation to house both town offices and a new police station,” Barber wrote.

A follow-up study was conducted in 2008-09 and named Memorial Elementary School (MES) as a possible location to relocate the children in the fourth- and fifth-grade Center School. But Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas emphasized that an updated feasibility study would need to be conducted to confirm if MES is still a viable option. The study also considered the construction of a new Center School.

The school board and Town Council followed up with the matter in a joint workshop last Thursday, Feb. 20, at East Hampton High School. The workshop drew a crowd of approxi-

mately 30 people.

Barber kicked off the evening by reiterating the school board’s interest in repurposing the Center School building.

He said, “Our physical facilities – all of them – are in a state of disrepair. They are all too small for the use of our community.”

He said to the council, “We would ask you to consider the possibility of a complete rework of the town’s facilities and their physical plan. We’re asking you to consider using the Center School as a central hub for municipal services.”

Barber said repurposing the Village Center-based Center School could lead to benefits such as: revitalizing the town center; lessening the impact on the town’s water supply system in the short run; reducing the need of capital improvements; eliminating rent costs for the town (the current Board of Education building is rented); and reducing operating budgets in all departments.

“The concept would be to reduce facilities, rather than expand facilities,” Barber said.

He also mentioned that because a feasibility study has already been conducted, the town wouldn’t have to “start from scratch.” Instead, the town would simply need to “modernize” its already existing plans.

Barber also noted that repairs to Center School need to be completed either in this proposed project or at a later expense to taxpayers.

Board of Education member Scott Minnick echoed Barber.

“That school has to be paid for no matter what – whether it’s a school or a municipal build-  
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## Basketball Teams Wrap Undefeated Seasons

by Geeta Schrayter

The basketball season came to an end at the beginning of the month, but for members of the RHAM Middle School girls’ basketball team – and their Coach Chris Mader – there are some great memories to remember the season by.

Both the varsity and junior varsity squads notched undefeated seasons, winning 15 and 12 games respectively.

Not only that, but the teams then headed off to Illing Middle School in Manchester Jan. 24-25 where the varsity team won the 2014 Buzz Wooldridge Invitational Tournament. RHAM hadn’t won the tournament since 2009.

Mader, who had just started coaching when the last tournament title was captured, said it was “great” to bring it home again.

“Manchester usually dominates the tournament,” he said. “Every year we go into the weekend and try to get a couple wins. The kids always take it real seriously and I’m glad our hard work paid off.”

He felt similarly about the team’s performance through the entire season and attributed their success to the high expectations they set and the abilities the players possessed.

“We hold ourselves to higher standards. Ev-

ery athlete this year created a team culture of discipline and high expectations,” he said. “We had a tremendously talented team with multiple athletes who could contribute. All five starters were leading scorers at different points in the season. It is hard to defend a team that has so many athletes who can score consistently.”

In addition, Mader said leadership was a “remarkable” team strength, as exemplified by the captains, Gretchen Kron of Hebron and Lia Baroncini of Marlborough.

The two girls “were incredibly strong and were the hardest workers on the team,” he said. “It is no coincidence that they were also two of the most skilled players.

“That culture of hard work is contagious,” Mader continued. “All eighth-graders were leaders at different points in the season.”

On Wednesday, Kron, who started playing basketball with the Hebron Parks and Recreation Department when she was in third-grade, said she and Baroncini talked a lot about the importance of leading.

“[Baroncini] and I have talked a lot and we thought that showing leadership is big and [we should] be a role model to others because it’ll

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The RHAM Middle School girls’ basketball teams had reason to smile as they finished up their season earlier this month. Both the varsity and junior varsity squads went undefeated this year, and the varsity team won the 2014 Buzz Wooldridge Invitational Tournament, held last month in Manchester.

**Repurposing cont. from Front Page**

ing,” Minnick concluded.  
 “If you decide not to take this offer,” Minnick said to the council, “taxpayers are still going to be spending money [on the Center School building].” He then listed a number of issues within the building that would need to be paid for one way or another: asbestos abatement, an old boiler and insulation problems.

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Board of Education facilities manager Donald Harwood said the school board’s proposed consolidation would build a sense of community and collaboration of shared services, as well as provide greater accessibility to town offices.

Regarding possible state reimbursement, Harwood said, “That has a significant impact to the community getting a bigger bang for their buck.” (Any renovation to a public school building has the potential of up to approximately 50 percent state reimbursement, but nothing is guaranteed.)

Harwood also noted there are “water consumption issues” that occur downtown, including at Center School. He anticipated that adults working at a town facility might use less water than the Center School students. However, those exact numbers have not yet been calculated, Harwood affirmed.

Harwood then discussed the town’s options in maintaining and operating Center School and its “aged infrastructure.” He said the building needs “major infrastructure attention.” For example, it has moisture infiltration that impacts the ceilings and floors, old furnishings, and its air handlers and boiler system are at their ends of life.

He said, “The whole building needs attention.”

Dugas then took the floor to discuss the “education benefits of the proposal.” She said those benefits include a “21st-century learning environment” for students, which calls for “a space that will foster collaboration, creativity, communication – and not just among students, but among staff,” she said.

Dugas said the multi-floor Center School building currently “poses a number of challenges” for staff and students. She furthered the set-up is “very difficult for our special needs population – for inclusion, for safety and security of some of those students.” She called the Center School building “more conducive for adults than young children.”

Additionally, Dugas speculated that busing students to one building rather than two (for example, if the students currently at Center School are moved to MES) would provide some cost savings in transportation.

Dugas affirmed that the town put aside approximately \$90,000 in capital for Center School for the 2014-15 school year – an amount she said is “scratching the surface in regards to the ongoing needs over time.”

Because no experts were called in yet to conduct a cost analysis, Harwood presented a “preliminary conceptual overview” of the potential financial impact of relocating Center School students. Dugas explained that Center School is currently made up of approximately 300 students and the building – which is approximately 40,000 sq. ft. – contains 14 classrooms.

Harwood’s overview was based on a seven-classroom conceptual design for a total of 17,000 sq. ft.

The idea is there would be two locations for the Center School students, each with seven classrooms, or one location with 14 classrooms, Dugas affirmed. If all 300 students from Center School were relocated to MES, then MES would house approximately 900 students, she said.

Based on an approximate expense of \$500 per square foot – a typical construction cost, Harwood said – and after factoring in soft costs, the cost of potentially relocating students and possibly expanding an existing East Hampton school, the project would probably range from \$11 million to \$13 million, he said. He emphasized that those numbers are his own estimates, and not based on an expert analysis.

Harwood suggested a timeline for potentially moving forward with the proposal. He said the first step would be to form a study review focus group; then a cost analysis should be done; followed by a conceptual and schematic design; finally construction documents would need to be accessed and then the project could go out to bid.

But the lack of hard numbers proved to be a concern for members of the Town Council. Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore said her council had been holding executive sessions “right from Election Day” in which members have discussed a slew of options for housing

town facilities.

“We are trying to decide the best thing to do for the town,” Moore said. “None of us are at liberty to discuss any of that at this time.”

Town Council Vice Chairman Kevin Reich also said the current members of the Town Council “came out running in November. We have not stopped looking at alternatives. And yes, we did look at this alternative.”

But because all discussions have taken place in Town Council executive sessions, Barber said, “We weren’t sure you even had considered this.”

During the public comment portion of the workshop, resident Mary Ann Dostaler expressed her upset in the lack of information available to the public.

She said, “The community has no idea what is being considered. If in fact the council is considering buying a piece of property and building yet another stand-alone facility for the town, it really should be presented as to how that plan is better for the long-term interest account than doing a consolidation. I would definitely want to be able to see more public discussion.”

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In focusing on the police department in question, Town Manager Mike Maniscalco explained he put “a \$6 million placeholder in the capital budget with the intent to start a conversation about the police department.” He affirmed the \$6 million has not yet been approved, but if it were, it would come out of bonding.

Also regarding the current police department, Maniscalco explained that the parking lot behind Town Hall – where the police park – is actually owned by CL&P. But with CL&P planning to expand and add staff (for which construction is due to begin in April), the East Hampton Police probably won’t be able to park in that lot anymore, he said. Even if CL&P does allow police to continue parking there, the added traffic in the driveway may be detrimental if police need to respond to a call quickly, Maniscalco said.

The town manager also reminded members of the boards that the town’s current credit rating is AA+ and was issued to the town before it took on the \$51 million East Hampton High School renovation project. He said that by taking on another costly project – like renovating Center School – “we could potentially be putting our credit rating at risk.”

He added, regarding the school board’s proposal, “I do wonder, when we’re looking at the whole picture, how are we going to afford it?”

Moore also noted that the council is working “diligently to come up with a capital budget that the people of East Hampton are willing and can pay for.” She, too, questioned how the town would pay for the project.

Dostaler said during public comment that it was “completely unrealistic and inappropriate” for the Town Council to ask the Board of Education for the cost of moving the town hall into Center School. Rather, she said, the Town Council would need to come up with those numbers by forming committees and groups.

Board of Education member Steven Kelley also emphasized the importance of a focus group. He said, “I think we really need to form that focus group to really sit down and look at this and break it apart and really decide if this is going to save us money in the long run.”

Reich said he looked forward to going through the proposal and considering its feasibility.

“I’m boggled as to how we can pull this off,” Reich said. “I guess the key factor would be getting a group together to really analyze this presentation.”

Cynthia Abraham, a member of the high school building committee, said during public comment that she’d rather see the formation of another building committee made up of professionals, not a focus group as was suggested. She said to assume Center School is the best place for the town hall is “dangerous.” Instead of assuming, a building committee could figure out for certain what the best options are.

But in a logical assumption, Reich said, “It is a good idea to eliminate the number of town buildings that we have and have to maintain. You’re talking about reducing staff, you’re talking about reducing lots of various items.”

Council member Patience Anderson added, “I think it does pose some very interesting solutions.” But, like her fellow council members, Anderson said, “I’m just concerned about dollars.”

Councilman Ted Hintz said perhaps the town should have gone through with renovating and repurposing Center School years ago.

He said, “The high school project has a \$51 million price tag and now we’re looking at many

millions more in order to redesign. I think we might have missed the boat.”

Barber summed up his board’s understanding of the proposal and closed the joint-workshop.

“I don’t have the answers. I’ve got concepts,” Barber said. “I don’t know exactly how much it’s going to cost and I don’t know where that check is coming from. But we do know basic common sense: less buildings is less expenses.”

He concluded that the current town offices and police department are housed in “inadequate” buildings and noted that addressing the problem would put the town in a good position for the future.

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The Town Council had its first read of a Town

Facilities Building Committee resolution at its meeting Tuesday night.

The resolution, as it stands now, states that a seven-member committee would be charged with the task of reviewing, planning, designing and building or renovating town facilities. The purpose of their work would be “to provide an efficient work environment for town staff, better services for residents of East Hampton while considering the tax impact of this project and other projects in town,” according to the resolution.

The council did not take action on the resolution this week, but said the matter would be addressed at its next meeting, Tuesday, March 11.



**Varsity players Anna Barry, front, and Alana Hruska, rear, play defense at one of the 15 games they played – and won – this season. Their coach Chris Mader attributed the success of both the varsity and junior varsity teams to the high expectations they held themselves to as well as the talent of the players and the leadership exhibited.**

**Basketball cont. from Front Page**

help them be better players and so would help us [as a team],” she explained.

Speaking on the season, Kron said going undefeated was a big accomplishment.

“I was very glad I was a part of it and I couldn’t have asked for a better team,” she said, explaining, “We worked so well together and Mr. Mader worked us really hard and it became very beneficial to us; I thought he had a big role in our accomplishment.”

Kron said the team’s strengths were working together and sharing the ball, and that “everyone contributed to the undefeated season.”

Varsity player Katie Shea felt similarly. Like Kron, Shea has been playing basketball since early on and started with the Parks and Rec. team. She said this week the team’s greatest strength was unity.

“The chemistry was absolutely amazing. I found I could count on every single girl both junior varsity and varsity and that really brought us together,” she said and added she knew early on their team was “really good.”

“I’ve played with most of these girls more than once and I just felt comfortable with our team and when we finally reached that last game it finally became real that we might be undefeated,” Shea stated.

And when that happened, Shea said it was “quite a feeling.”

“We worked so hard as a team together, it was just unbelievable that we could be undefeated” Shea said, adding their coach was “really, really happy” and explaining “he’s never had an undefeated team before and I’ve never played on a team that’s been undefeated before either and I played on some really good teams.”

So to cap everything off with a tournament win for the varsity team was then the icing on the cake.

“I thought it was really great,” Kron stated of winning. “Mr. Mader said we hadn’t won that in a long time and for us to win it was really

important and it shows how great we are as a team and how we work together.”

Winning the tournament “was just an added bonus,” said Shea. “I can’t even really describe it.”

The season was so successful that both Shea and Kron said they couldn’t think of any challenges or struggles faced by the team.

“I think our closest game was a 10-point win so we never really struggled against an opponent,” Shea stated. “I can’t really think of, as a team, a weakness that we had because we were just so strong.”

Kron also couldn’t think of any challenges, and said, “I think all positive things came out of this season.”

Their coach however, said rebounding and being physical was always an area that could use improvement at the middle school level.

“We could always use more gym time,” Mader explained. “Snow days, cancellations and a heavy game schedule in January make it challenging to fit in enough practices.”

In response, “we just do the best we can with the time we have” Mader furthered, explaining the players learned to be “incredibly efficient” during practice.

“We don’t waste time; it’s our most valuable resource,” he stated.

And that efficiency seemed to serve the team well.

“Being undefeated is incredibly rare in middle school basketball,” Mader reflected of the season. “I thought we would have a chance but was a bit surprised at the way we dominated our conference this year. The memory of this team and this season will be with me forever.”

That’ll likely be the case with the rest of the team as well, as they either move on to play in high school, or return for another season as eighth-graders next year, aiming to score another successful season.

# East Hampton Council Decides on Watrous Property for Grant Request

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Town Council touched upon a number of issues at its meeting Tuesday night, including its upcoming request for a \$500,000 state grant.

Each year, the state awards select towns with Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grants of up to \$500,000. STEAP grants are annual opportunities for towns to receive state funding for a variety of projects that would boost local economy. This year's grant request application is due in April.

A town can receive up to \$500,000 in funding and can apply for more than one grant, so long as the total amount the town applies for does not exceed \$500,000. For example, last year, the town submitted two grant applications, each for \$250,000, but was only awarded one, which went toward putting a roof on the Epoch Arts building.

Tuesday night, the council voted unanimously to request the full \$500,000 amount go toward remediation of the property at 13 Watrous St. – if East Hampton receives the grant, the funds will be used to remediate the environmental liability that the town currently carries and place a brownfield back on the market for economic development.

Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore said specifically the \$500,000 would go toward tearing down the main portion of the building and removing some of the contaminated soil on the property.

Councilman Mark Philhower said he was “highly in favor” in cleaning up the site at 13 Watrous St., which he said needs \$750,000 worth of work. After it gets cleaned up, he said, it could be sold to a tax-producing entity.

The council also considered requesting STEAP grant money to go toward Lake Pocotopaug infrastructure – council members considered using STEAP funds to improve the infrastructure around Lake Pocotopaug in an effort to reduce storm water run-off into the lake.

Moore said, “I really think that the lake does deserve help.”

Councilman George Pfaffenbach suggested splitting the \$500,000 amount between the two initiatives because, he said, he'd “hate to cut [Lake Pocotopaug] off completely.”

But council member Patience Anderson expressed concerns in “diluting” the amount of funding from the state that could potentially go to one of the two projects.

“I am concerned about splitting it,” she said. “They're both huge.”

Ultimately, Anderson said she was more immediately concerned about the Watrous Street property, calling it a “liability on the town.” Plus, she said, fixing up the site would aid in “future economic development in the Village Center.” However, she emphasized that she thinks the lake is also important.

Hintz agreed, saying, “I think we probably should be trying to clean that parcel up.” He added that the town could apply for a STEAP grant next year for improvements to Lake Pocotopaug.

But Town Council Vice Chairman Kevin Reich offered an alternative. He said, “The lake needs to be part of our capital improvement plan.”

However, Reich did agree, based on the rapidly-approaching deadline for the STEAP grant request, that the council was “better prepared” to address the contamination on Watrous Street than to clean up the lake.

“We could get a good portion of this [13 Watrous St. project] completed,” Reich said.

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Also at the meeting, Director of Parks and Recreation Ruth Checko updated the council on summer happenings at Sears Park.

Currently there is a residency parking restriction at Sears Park; the cost of a vehicle sticker is \$10 annually (or \$5 for a veteran or senior citizen) and the cost of a boat sticker is \$50 – half of which goes into a revenue account for improvements to the boat launch side of the park. Checko recommended that those annual fees remain.

She informed the council that Parks and Recreation sold nearly 800 vehicle stickers and nearly 300 veteran/senior stickers for the summer of 2013. Just fewer than 200 boat stickers were sold last summer.

“If you decide not to charge the residents for those stickers, that would be a loss in revenue of about \$13,000 annually,” Checko warned.

Regarding waiving sticker fees and, thus, entrance to the park, Hintz said, “I think it should be open to all residents and I don't think it should have a fee associated with it.” He furthered, “I don't think residents should have to pay to utilize the property.”

Anderson commented that she “really would like to see those [vehicle] fees removed – but keep the boat sticker fee.”

The council voted unanimously to waive the \$10 vehicle fee for residents for the upcoming summer, but keep the \$50 boat pass fee. Residents will still need to obtain vehicle passes this summer; they simply won't pay for said passes.

Regarding the park's concession stand, while in the past the stand offered grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, Checko explained that last summer it only sold pre-packaged food – and came out with an approximately \$600 profit.

Checko said “it was the first year we did not lose money.”

She furthered the department plans to run the concession stand the same way this summer. It will open in the last week of June and remain open until summer camps are over in August.

Checko said it costs approximately \$60,000 per year to run Sears Park.

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Also at Tuesday's meeting, the Town Council unanimously voted to send the town's capital policy back to the Board of Finance.

Anderson affirmed that the capital policy had not yet been approved.

Reich added, “We really need to have a sinking fund for large items.”

For example, Reich said he considered the \$500,000 tanker truck for the fire department a “large item.”

The Board of Finance already approved the purchase of a tanker truck, and the council followed suit Tuesday night. However, Hintz had one condition: that the truck not be bonded. The rest of the council agreed, so instead, a portion of the cost will be covered by the public safety fund, and the remainder will be covered by the general fund. The proposed purchase will go to a town meeting Monday, March 24.

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Also on Tuesday, the council unanimously

voted to move forward, at the town manager's recommendation, with a new two-year contract between East Hampton and the town's dispatch service, Colchester Emergency Communications (KX). Under the terms of the contract, East Hampton would have to pay an early termination fee if it exits the deal before the two years are up.

Another unanimous vote came in the form of approving a resolution for a Water Development Task Force. The task force will consist of seven members total: one member of the Town Council, two members of the Water Pollution Control Authority, one member of the former Public Water System Task Force, one member of the Board of Finance, one member of the Economic Development Commission, and one member of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Once appointed, members will remain on the task force until the completion of the project, which, according to the resolution, requires they “work with the state Department of Public Health to determine the best solutions for the immediate needs of the Village Center as well as future expansion;” “determine the costs associated with a water system;” “review and consider the necessary engineering plan;” “prepare an implementation plan;” and “present findings to the Town Council for approval.”

The council also voted unanimously to approve a contract with the lowest bidder, Shock Electrical Contractors Inc., out of Danbury, for the high school athletic fields lighting project for approximately \$157,000.

Checko affirmed that construction would begin “as soon as possible” and the lights should be ready by September.

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Regarding the town's operating budget, Town Manager Mike Maniscalco said he and the town's finance manager have been going through spending from the past six years. He said they have been tasked with determining the town's “true needs” versus its “wants.”

The budget timeline can be found on the town's website, [easthamptonct.org](http://easthamptonct.org).

The next regularly scheduled East Hampton Town Council meeting is Tuesday, March 11, at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

# East Hampton School Board Approves \$28.71 Million Budget

by Elizabeth Bowling

By a tight 5-3 vote, the Board of Education this week approved a \$28,707,560 million budget for the 2014-15 school year, an increase of \$1,176,697, or 4.3 percent, over current year spending.

The board started its work on the budget earlier this month, after Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas presented a preliminary 4.7 percent budget increase. Over the ensuing four weeks, the school board whittled down the initial 4.7 percent increase to one of 4.3 percent, which board members passed at their meeting Monday night.

Board members Scott Minnick, Bill Marshall, Steven Kelly, Christopher Goff and Jeffrey Carlson voted for the 4.3 percent increase; and board members Debra Devin, Emily Fahle and Josh Piteo voted against it.

Minnick quipped that the 4.3 percent increase was “a decent compromise that I think we can all equally feel upset about.”

Minnick had argued in favor of the superintendent's original proposal for a 4.7 percent increase, and said he voted in favor of the 4.3 percent increase “with reservations because

I think it should be higher.”

He called the 4.7 percent budget increase “tight” and “certainly not extravagant.” For example, Minnick said approximately 80 percent – or more than \$22 million – is made up of salaries, wages and benefits, items that are out board's hands.

Other line items “that are out of the realm of our influence,” according to Minnick, include technology and special education needs.

Another half million dollars will go toward state mandates like the new Common Core State Standards, teacher/administrator evaluations, and school safety and security. Additionally, approximately \$1.2 million will go toward magnet school tuition and transportation.

Minnick also noted that next year's budget is light on initiatives, with the exception of the implementation of full-day kindergarten for all, which is priced at approximately \$66,000 in next year's budget.

On the opposite end of the spectrum from Minnick, Piteo said he wanted to see a budget increase under 4 percent.

At a previous Board of Education meeting,

board members requested to see which items would be cut if they moved forward with a budget that has an increase of less than 4.7 percent – one at a 4.5 percent increase, one at 4.25 percent and another at 3.99 percent.

At the lower extreme, a 3.99 percent budget increase would call for the cutting of a teacher position. Carlson said, “I don't think we should go that direction,” calling it a “disservice to the students” and a “last resort.”

But regarding the 4.7 percent extreme, Piteo said, “I don't think spending that amount is going to make things that much better.”

He furthered that students have excelled given relatively small budget increases in the past few years. In the 2010-11 school year, the East Hampton school board budget saw a 3.08 percent increase from the year before; in 2011-12, the increase was a 1.29 percent; in 2012-13, it was 1.9 percent; and in 2013-14, a 3.07 percent.

Based on those numbers, Dugas said her 4.7 percent budget increase proposal was “a conservative budget in terms of history.”

But regarding Dugas' original recommenda-

tion for a \$28,825,560 budget (the 4.7 percent increase), Devin said, “It's just so much money. It just kind of blows my mind away.”

Personally, Barber said he wanted to “push forward” a “responsible budget.” But keeping in mind the importance of the town's school system, Barber said, “No one comes to this town for the quality of the police jail cells.”

But in the end, it was the 4.3 percent increase the board settled on and will send forward in the budget season.

Barber reminded the board members that they are not the final decision-makers on the Board of Education budget. After the school board approves its budget, it must go to the Board of Finance and potentially face more cuts before being sent to the Town Council where it could get cut even further. Then it goes up for the ultimate challenge: a town vote, to be held May 6.

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The next regularly scheduled East Hampton Board of Education meeting is Monday, March 10, at 7 p.m., at the East Hampton High School media center.

# Speaking Out Against Common Core in Portland

by Elizabeth Bowling

Portland hosted a seminar Saturday, Feb. 22, which brought up a number of concerns regarding the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The seminar, held at the Portland Senior Center, drew a crowd of more than 100 people and touched upon potentially-negative impacts of the new state standards.

University of Arkansas professor Sandra Stotsky, who served on the nationwide Common Core Validation Committee but refused to sign off on the standards, was featured as a speaker.

More than 10 years ago Stotsky – who specializes in language arts – was the senior associate commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Education. She was responsible for the revision and development of all K-12 standards in the state.

She said Massachusetts public schools were coming out on top in terms of national testing and were doing “extremely well” on international testing.

In 2010, she was on the Massachusetts state Board of Education when it adopted the CCSS. “We were promised \$250 million in Race to the Top money. It was clearly: throw your grandmother under the bus for \$250 million. How could you pass up that kind of money?”

She called Massachusetts the “sacrificial lamb” so that other states would also adopt the CCSS, which she called “clearly inferior standards.” The idea was, she said, “If Massachusetts was going to give up its great standards, then other states would.”

Stotsky wore another hat in 2009-10, as well; she was a member of the Common Core Validation Committee.

She said she hoped that, as a result of her membership, she would be a part of developing rigorous academic standards in the United States, but “that wasn’t the case, at all.”

She said the Validation Committee meetings were held in secret, and few to no records exist regarding the writing of the standards. She also noted that parents, high school English and math teachers, and literary scholars were excluded from the committee.

According to Stotsky, the two groups that developed the CCSS are the National Governors Association (NGA), made up of governors, and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), made up of superintendents or com-

missioners of education. She said the members of both groups pay dues that come out of taxpayer dollars.

The people selected by the NGA and the CCSSO to actually write the standards were mostly employed by national standardized testing companies, such as the one behind the ACT.

But none were teachers, she said, though she thought they should have been. She especially thought teachers of higher education should have been a part of the process because they would know exactly what “college readiness” means. Instead, the CCSS are a “bizarre set of standards written by unqualified people,” she said.

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One issue Stotsky addressed Saturday was: what should be taught in Connecticut’s public schools.

“The public school belongs to everybody. There is no Republican or Democratic or vegetarian notion of what pre-calculus standards should look like,” she said, for example. “There are pre-calculus standards that mathematicians know should be in a high school course.”

She furthered, “There should be standards there. And they are not partisan standards; they are academic standards.”

But Stotsky said the math standards in the CCSS don’t actually prepare students for higher education, as they only require that students get through algebra II. Additionally, it delays the teaching of algebra I to ninth or 10th grade, she said.

“If you kill math or lower math, you also kill science,” she added, emphasizing that 21st century jobs are in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

She said the CCSS are not STEM-based, despite her opinion that they should be; they are not rigorous; and they are not internationally-benchmarked.

Stotsky said the standards in English and language arts are also flawed. She said the very nature of the English standards is problematic. One of her major concerns is the “imbalance built in” to the standards, as there is a greater emphasis on writing more so than reading.

She argued, “Good writers come from being exposed to good reading material;” rather than the other way around.

Another major flaw, she said, is that more than half of a student’s reading will be based



Professor Sandra Stotsky expressed many concerns with the new Common Core State Standards during a seminar held at Portland Senior Center last weekend.

on informational text, leaving less than half to literature.

“If there’s any one place where kids learn how to develop analytical reading and thinking, it’s by learning to read between the lines of a complex literary text,” she said. “You don’t learn to read analytically by looking at a history textbook, a science textbook or a math textbook.”

Without that analytical reading and thinking, children will have fewer opportunities to develop critical thinking, she furthered.

Additionally, Stotsky called the writing standards “developmentally-inappropriate” at the different grade levels because they ask too much of young students. For example, the standards require that fifth-graders be able to identify a “claim” in a writing sample, which she said is “very pretentious.”

Alas, she said, parents are “stuck with” the new standards because the state Board of Edu-

cation, the state Department of Education and the governor have approved them.

Now, she said, legislators are trying to create legislation “to get out of this sticky jar of molasses that their state boards put them in.”

Stotsky added the Connecticut legislature won’t hear any bills on the CCSS as a tactic to “stifle discussion of Common Core altogether.”

Regarding the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), which is the computerized test that will assess the CCSS, Stotsky said, “Nothing has been piloted with these items to begin with. They’re rushing it into place.”

She suggested that districts across Connecticut gather teacher feedback on the CCSS and send that feedback to the state Department of Education, the governor’s office and legislators. She said teachers should take the SBA before their students take the test. Her concern is that the test itself, not its content, is going to be an issue for students.

## Town to Own Colchester Senior Center?

by Melissa Roberto

The Board of Selectmen last Thursday, Feb. 20, unanimously supported the formation of a committee responsible for entering into negotiations to possibly purchase the building and property of the Senior Center.

The idea was brought forth by selectwoman Rosemary Coyle, who explained the committee would be bipartisan, consisting of First Selectman Gregg Schuster, another member of the Board of Selectmen and two members of the Board of Finance. The committee is expected to negotiate with the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees, which owns the senior center at 95 Norwich Ave., and to make a recommendation to the boards of selectmen and finance regarding a purchase by the end of the current fiscal year, or June 30.

Coyle stressed this committee is similar to the former Selectmen Operations Committee, in that it is bipartisan. The former committee – also made up of selectmen and finance members, and Bacon trustees members – was responsible for coming up with solutions to the trustees’ financial downturn. It was explained last year that the Board of Trustees has struggled to afford the maintenance and repairs of the three buildings it owns: the senior center, Old Bacon Academy and Day Hall.

Included in the operations committee report was the recommendation of purchasing the senior center land and property over a five-year plan, at a cost to the town of \$60,000 annually. That value came from an approximate \$300,000 appraisal of the land conducted last year. The new committee would conduct negotiations in response to that recommendation, and Coyle made sure to include the word “possibility” in her motion.

“I think that we have lots of recommenda-

tions,” Coyle said, “and the one that just has made the most sense to me – to start and focus on – is the one about whether we should purchase the actual building of the senior center.”

Coyle furthered, “If it’s something we want to do than we take it to the town and do it... At this point in time we need to go forward with this and decide one way or the other.”

Selectman Mike Caplet voiced his support of this action.

“I like the concept of inclusiveness with the Board of Finance,” he told Coyle. “The report from the subcommittee was very thorough. I think your motion is great. I think it’s moving us in the right direction.”

Though they were in favor of the action, selectman Stan Soby, who sat on the operations committee last year, and Schuster each reminded the board a plan for the future of a senior center still needs to be determined.

“We still have to address the issue of the senior center,” Soby said. “We need to be looking at what comes next because that’s been [on the] back burner a few times.”

Schuster echoed a similar sentiment stating, “I think this board, if we are going to move forward with a purchase, [should] make a very strong statement and put in place a plan of what it is we are going to do [with the Senior Center].”

Schuster continued he has seniors in town “continually asking me and saying ‘Don’t forget about us,’” and furthered his hope is for the board to come to a decision so the selectmen can “look the seniors in the face and say what the plan is.”

Coyle concluded her motion and the formation of the committee would specifically look

at the decision of whether or not the town purchases the land and associated building. The selectwoman added she wouldn’t want this committee’s work to confuse the public so she “specifically tried to make this bipartisan and clean so the decision is about the purchasing.”

\* \* \*

Also at Thursday’s meeting, Schuster gave a presentation to the board regarding the possible restructuring of Town Hall operations. It was the same presentation he gave the Board of Finance last December, he said. The original request was to discuss “greater flexibility” within Town Hall and to investigate possible changes. Schuster’s presentation included three options that mainly would affect the departments of recreation, assessor, town clerk and tax collector.

The first option was to share staff among the departments. This would lead to possible changes in job descriptions so individuals could work in multiple offices, Schuster explained. The second option was bringing in a floater employee, who would fill in gaps within multiple departments. The third option was a customer service model, in which one space would be use to house all four departments. The latter option would require physical changes to the building, Schuster said.

The first selectman stressed the presentation was for “initial discussion,” with “nothing” to be taken as final. Board members requested Schuster to further investigate the options including feedback from town officials within the aforementioned departments.

\* \* \*

Additionally, the board unanimously voted to award Associated Security a 90-day contract

to perform security upgrades to both town and school facilities. After the meeting, Public Works Director Jim Paggioli explained the upgrades include proximity readers to four doors at each of the Colchester public schools, and proximity readers to doors at Town Hall, as well as security cameras at Town Hall and the Cragin Memorial Library.

Paggioli said the total cost is approximately \$58,000. Schuster said these upgrades are to be paid for from an “off-budget” account. The account is a state-mandated account that operates under Local Capital Improvement Plan (LoCIP) rules.

The board also discussed which recommendations from the Fire Department Task Force it would look into first. This discussion comes after the task force presented its five recommendations to the selectmen at a Feb. 6 meeting. The task force was formed to recommend solutions to strengthen recruitment and retention at the Colchester Hayward Fire Department. The board agreed to first look into the recommendation of negotiating a new contract between the fire department and the town and, secondly, to continue taking steps to develop a Strategic Plan.

The board also unanimously approved the formation of a charter review committee. Schuster stressed this is not to be confused with a charter revision committee. The formation is required every 10 years by town charter. The commission would be responsible for reviewing the charter and making recommendations to the selectmen if any are necessary.

The next regular Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 6, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

# Colchester School Board Approves \$40.40 Million School Budget

by **Melissa Roberto**

The Board of Education Tuesday unanimously approved Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Mathieu's proposed budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year – a spending package that amounts to \$40,401,238.

The freshly-adopted budget, an increase of \$1,325,184, or 3.39 percent, over current year spending, is off to the Board of Finance for consideration next week. Chairman of the school board Ron Goldstein reminded the board it's "really just the beginning of the review process," as meetings will take place throughout the next month, at which the finance board will delve into the numbers more specifically.

The Board of Education made no cuts to the school budget Mathieu initially presented on Jan. 28. The superintendent highlighted once more Tuesday night what aspects of the budget drive the increase. A nearly \$400,000 increase is found in the salaries account, benefits are up \$400, and transportation is up \$144,000.

One of the biggest increases, Mathieu said, is tuition, at \$260,000. The allotment for facilities and grounds is also proposed to rise by \$119,000, and the greatest increase of all is capital, which is going up \$300,000. A majority of capital is proposed to be spent on WJJMS and Bacon Academy. At Bacon, \$100,000 would be used towards a AC system for a server room, grease trap for the cafeteria, repairs to a boiler and roof repairs. At WJJMS, \$188,000 would go towards exterior window blind replacements and door shades, HVAC repairs, a phone/intercom replacement and a railing installation.

Additionally, Mathieu broke out insurance costs in a presentation he made Tuesday, showing that since the 2010-11 fiscal year, insurance contributions have increased by 41.3 percent, or 1.59 million. Of the insurance increases, Mathieu said that's "one of the driving factors."

The budget also places an emphasis on technology. This is due to state mandates requiring students to take standardized tests on computers, administrators explained Jan. 28. Included in the school budget are salaries of two new positions, an IT network engineer and an IT technology specialist. Mathieu and Director of Teaching and Learning Barbara Gilbert said these positions would support technology in all of the schools at a higher level and would replace a current engineer position, which was described as a "break-fix" employee only responsible for making simple computer improve-

ments.

Nearly \$24,000 is also included in the budget to go toward the purchasing of iPads – an expenditure criticized by student board member Mitchell Hallee at the board's Feb. 19 meeting. Hallee specifically stated he did not think iPads were a good idea at the high school level. He also mentioned replacing the idea of iPads with a less expensive option such as the Amazon Kindle.

Though Hallee was absent from Tuesday's meeting, Gilbert supplied board members with examples of how iPads differ from Kindles, as they are more than just e-readers. She also used video footage and a list of apps from teachers showing how they are currently used in Colchester classrooms.

An iPad "is quite amazing how it works and how people are using it," Gilbert said.

The director provided board members with a list of over 50 apps teachers in the district currently use during lessons from iPads. Gilbert explained money in the budget would help fund more iPads to be placed within media centers at each school for teacher and student use. Though the goal is to one day have "three or four" in each classroom, Gilbert said this year's proposal is "just a start."

Barbara Johnson, a technology and library specialist at Colchester Elementary School and WJJMS, who was seated in the crowd, explained how five iPads that currently exist at each school have enhanced learning.

"For what we need and what the kids are using and the apps supplied, it's the best bang for the buck," Johnson said. "For kindergarten through second grade there's nothing like an iPad to just free a child's ability where their pencil cannot keep up fast enough with their mind. Turn on the microphone on an iPad and you would not believe the stories and qualities of work we get from someone who is 5."

Gilbert also presented videos of students who had been filmed using an iPad explaining how to solve algebra and subtraction problems. Barbara Shaughnessy, director of pupil services, further stressed the importance of iPad use, stating they are used for non-verbal kids in the district, offering students "different softwares depending on their cognitive ability."

It was also communicated that the new state-mandated Smarter Balanced Assessment (that will replace the Connecticut Mastery Test) can be taken on iPads.

In addition, Mathieu gave a short presentation that answered common questions that have been raised about the budget since its initial presentation. One questioned why only 1.6 staff positions are proposed to be cut while student enrollment is projected to decrease. Mathieu concluded a drop in enrollment doesn't necessarily create a need for reduction in staff.

"We have different variables we have to take into consideration," Mathieu said. "This is not a math problem. This is not as easy as 'you have this many students in a class, you can cut different variables.'"

He referenced limitations included in the teacher's contract, which includes class sizes that cannot be exceeded, as well as limitations pertaining to the scheduling of teachers, thus creating a need for a certain number of teachers regardless of the population dropping. For example, Mathieu read aloud, "teachers in grades six through 12 shall not be required to teach more than three subjects nor make more than three teaching preparations within said subjects at any time."

Other variables to take into consideration are the need for additional teachers in circumstances of special education, students with different learning styles and learning environment. Additionally, the superintendent referenced fiscal year 2012-13 where a total of 7.7 staff reductions were made, which didn't work out in the district's favor.

"This actually cost us more money in the long run," Mathieu said. "Those teachers collected unemployment."

Per pupil expenditure – or the amount the district spends on each student – was also referenced. Of all 24 towns in Colchester's district reference group (DRG), Colchester ranks 20 out of 24.

"I don't want to lose the sight that we're doing so much with less than our surrounding towns, less than our DRG and less than our state, yet we're still able to produce our scores," Mathieu pointed out.

Additionally, Mathieu announced the recognition the district received by the Yankee Institute for Public Policy. He said the institute recognized Colchester for educating "its students most efficiently of the 111 districts reviewed, spending only \$129,099 over 13 years."

Positively, by the end of the meeting, Goldstein reflected on the budget proposal.

"I think administration has done a terrific job

bringing forward a responsible budget," the chairman said. "[It's] one that move us forward in important ways, the technology issues in particular we have addressed, and what we're just hearing now of the enhancement of our iPad use."

Goldstein furthered he hopes administration will keep the \$300,000 spending for capital during budget deliberations. He stressed the importance of it.

"We have had a period of time in which, admittedly, we haven't spent a lot on capital," Goldstein said. "We need to stay close to that [\$300,000] because we've had a history of underfunding that."

Tuesday's board meeting also seemed to be just as pleasing to citizens in the crowd and one in particular, Ralph Marshall, communicated this. The meeting had begun with public comments, during which Marshall came prepared with questions on multiple costs. During comments at the end, he described himself as a retired elementary school principal with 35 years in the field of education – and said he was leaving with a better understanding of some of the board's needs.

"The shoe is on the other foot now as far as being a taxpayer, so that's why I'm here tonight, because it's costing me a lot of money to live here in Colchester," Marshall told the board.

However, he said he understands the "different world" education is today. He said he was leaving the meeting knowledgeable of the need for technology and wanted to further his knowledge by visiting a school, and to perhaps bring some friends.

"A lot of people my age are in the same boat. They don't understand half of what you're talking about with the iPads and all this stuff," Marshall explained.

"You're not going to change the minds of some of the die-hard people out there," he added. "The only way you're going to do that is to get them into the schools so they can see."

After the meeting, administrators jumped at the opportunity to plan for a day Marshall could come to the school. They also voiced support of welcoming other senior citizens.

The Board of Education budget is scheduled to be presented to the Board of Finance next week, along with the first presentation of the first selectman's budget, at a finance meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 5, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

# Separation Agreement with Colchester Tax Collector Approved

by **Melissa Roberto**

A separation agreement with Tax Collector Tricia Coblentz was approved by town officials at special meetings Tuesday night.

According to the meeting minutes on the town website [colchesterct.gov](http://colchesterct.gov), the boards of selectmen and finance each held special meetings to discuss the separation agreement. The selectmen convened first and entered into an executive session along with town attorney Patrick McHale and finance board members.

Following the executive session, both boards, at their respective meetings, unanimously approved an appropriation of \$34,295 from the general fund balance to two line items within the budget; \$31,858 to go into the Tax Collector Regular Salary line item and the remaining \$2,437 to go into the line item of Tax Collector FICA and Retirement.

The Board of Selectmen then unanimously

supported the approval of the agreement, allowing First Selectman Gregg Schuster to execute it.

Schuster said Wednesday he could not comment on the agreement because it is a "personnel matter."

Last July, the *Rivereast* reported records on file with the town indicated that Coblentz failed to declare improvements to her home on three separate occasions, which would have increased the property assessment of her home. The *Rivereast* reported in August that Coblentz had since applied for the permits.

Then in October, the Board of Selectmen at a special meeting on Oct. 9 decided that Coblentz would no longer be paid an annual salary of \$60,819. Instead, the selectmen voted to prorate Coblentz's pay based upon the number of hours she works each week in relation to

a 35-hour full-time schedule.

At the time, the *Rivereast* reported that this wiping of Coblentz's salary came during a change in the tax collector's office. Schuster told the *Rivereast* in October a staffing shortage had existed within the office; he said the shortage was due to planned and unplanned absences from one employee, whom he acknowledged as Coblentz. This also resulted in the tax office being closed during times it was supposed to be open, thus resulting in the hiring of Mike DesRoches, a certified tax collector, to temporarily work in the tax office when needed.

Back in October, Coblentz said she had been on Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) due to an illness. She said at the time she was still coming into work when she could. She added her illness coupled with the ongoing illness of

her daughter made it difficult for her to come to work. At the time, Coblentz commented that her work was "still continuing to be done...and it's still holding strong."

Coblentz was first elected to the position of tax collector on Nov. 19, 2007, for a four-year term. On Nov. 21, 2011, she won re-election by a margin of less than 20 votes. Her current term was to expire in November 2015.

The process of filling a vacant position of tax collector is stated in the town charter. It states, "If the position of Tax Collector is vacant for any cause, the Board of Selectmen shall immediately designate an Acting Tax Collector..."

In accordance with the charter, the acting tax collector will hold the office until the next regular election.

## RHAM School to Replace Failing Windows

by **Geeta Schrayter**

After a "massive" window failure was discovered at RHAM High School, a significant number of windows need to be replaced, costing the school more than \$125,000.

According to a Feb. 17 press release sent out by the RHAM Board of Education, over 160 windows installed during the high school's 2001-03 construction were found to be failing. Issues included stains and discoloration from long-term residual condensation and internal signs of moisture and frost during the colder months.

The windows were supplied by EFCO, a company based out of Missouri, and came with a 10-year warranty. That warranty was approaching its end when the issues were discovered, the release explained, but due to the number of windows affected, Schools Superintendent Bob Siminski filed a claim – and it was accepted by the company.

After a conference call took place last month between Siminski, Board of Education Chairman Danny Holtsclaw, Director of Maintenance Michael Ceresa, board members Joe O'Connor and Rich Jacobson and EFCO management, Holtsclaw said in the press release the company was willing to work with the school to address the issue.

According to the release, the company was willing to offer a different window that was said to be more reliable, and include any failed windows discovered since the claim was filed.

"It was clear from the tone of the conversation that EFCO is willing to cooperate with the district in light of the obvious widespread product failure," Holtsclaw wrote, but added

that "at the end of the day, the district still faces an unanticipated financial obligation to install the replacement windows" because installation isn't covered under the warranty.

As a result, the district would have to pay the cost for shipping, storing and installing the replacement windows for an estimated \$125,000.

But Holtsclaw said Thursday that number will likely rise.

The \$125,000 number was based on 160 windows he explained, but last Saturday, a combination of board members, staff members and members of the community went through the school and identified all of the affected windows, placing tags on each one and highlighting them on school's architectural plans.

And the total, he said, was actually "in excess of 200."

"So that installation cost estimate will go up," Holtsclaw said, explaining the next step was to meet with EFCO to work on finalizing the scope details and cost.

"We are facing a number of challenges for the upcoming budget season and this kind of unexpected expense makes our task more difficult," Holtsclaw wrote in the release.

On Monday, Siminski proposed a \$27.71 million budget for 2014-15 for an increase of 6.83 percent over the current year; a related story on the budget appears above. The school board will work on the spending proposal throughout March. The next budget meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 3, at 6:30 p.m., at RHAM High School.



While there were no injuries in the fire at 108 Abbey Rd., the home's garage – and the two cars inside of it – were heavily damaged. Photo by Jennifer Gasper.

## Residential in East Hampton Garage Catches Fire

by **Elizabeth Bowling**

A weekend fire on an Abbey Road property left a garage and home damaged, but no one was injured.

According to East Hampton Fire Chief Greg Voelker, the fire occurred Saturday afternoon, Feb. 22, in the garage at 108 Abbey Rd.

Voelker said two cars were parked in the garage, with their engines off. Both were totaled as a result of the fire, he said.

The fire chief described the incident as having "heavy smoke" and resulting in "some water damage in the house."

Phone records indicate the home belongs to Voleta and Kevin Villani. East Hampton Fire Marshal Rich Klotzbier said Voleta Villani returned to the house after picking her son up from soccer practice. She parked her car in the garage and she and her son went inside the home.

Klotzbier said her husband, Kevin, came home about 10 minutes later, at which time – around 2:15 p.m. – the family called 911.

The fire marshal ensured that the fire was "pretty much contained in the garage," though there was some heat damage to the house.

Klotzbier said the fire originated in the car Voleta Villani had been driving, but he "can't pinpoint the exact location in the car" and "can't assume" whether the fire started before or after the engine was shut off.

Town Manager Mike Maniscalco commended the East Hampton Fire Department at Tuesday night's Town Council meeting.

"Our fire department did an excellent job," he said. "They truly saved that building, saved that home and a lot of personal possessions."

## Colchester Police News

2/17: State Police said Leon E. Hemingway, 41, of 45 Lebanon Ave., was charged with violation of a protective order.

2/18: State Police said Kyle F. Grechika, 31, of 76 Mott Ln., Moodus, was charged with second-degree failure to appear.

2/21: Colchester Police responded to a two-car accident on South Main Street by Wendy's restaurant at approximately 9:10 p.m. Police said one passenger, Cassandra L. Marvin, 38, of 429 Parum Rd., was transported to the Marlborough Clinic by the Colchester Hayward Fire Department for neck and back pain.

2/22: Colchester Police said Richard Kevin Miller, 53, of 1539 Portland Cobalt Rd., Portland, was charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, insurance coverage fails

to meet minimum requirements, tampering with evidence, and possession of less than half of an ounce of cannabis.

2/22: State Police said Adreanne Swanson, 33, of 152 Geer Rd., Lebanon, was charged with DUI.

2/24: State Police said Jonathan Rice, 26, of 195 Whitney St., Hartford, was charged with DUI, failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple-lane highway, and possession of less than half of an ounce of cannabis.

2/25: State Police said Michael Veilleux, 49, of 60 Beaumont Highway, Lebanon, turned himself into Troop K on a warrant for sixth-degree larceny and third-degree criminal trespass.

## Portland Police News

2/14: David Smith, 24, of 7 Freestone Ave., was charged with third-degree burglary, third-degree larceny and second-degree criminal mischief, Portland Police said.

2/16: Christopher Howard, 19, of 10 Joelle Dr., was charged with disorderly conduct, third-degree criminal mischief and interfering with a 911 call, police said.

2/24: Zachary Ellis, 21, of 167 Mountain Archer Rd., Lyme, was charged with DUI and failure to drive in proper lane, police said.

## East Hampton Police News

2/10: Elizabeth Warzecha, 22, of 45 Copper Beach Ln., was arrested for DUI, failure to drive right and possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia, East Hampton Police said.

2/10: Caitlin Holliman, 27, of 61 Loomis Rd., Bolton, was arrested for DUI, police said.

## Hebron Police News

2/21: State Police said Timothy Foley, 19, of 1166 Gilead St., turned himself in on an active arrest warrant for second-degree failure to appear.

2/21: State Police said between 7 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., registration plates were stolen off of a vehicle at Veterans Park in Hebron. Anyone with information is asked to contact Trooper Derek McGregor at 860-465-5400 ext. 706.

2/22: State Police said Michael Anthony Tongren, 35, of 62 Sycamore St., Glastonbury, was charged with DUI, traveling unreasonably fast for conditions and making an improper turn.

2/22: State Police said Michael H. Swirzewski, 60, of 80 Farmington Ave., B1, New Britain, was charged with DWI and failure to grant right of way.

## Andover Police News

2/22: State Police said Diane Brousseau, 47, of 55 Bear Swamp Rd., was traveling west on Route 6, just west of Route 87 when she crossed over into the eastbound lane, striking Kevin Hartery, 27, of 641 Pudding Hill Rd., Hampton, who was traveling eastbound. After impact, Police said Brousseau continued west in the eastbound lane and struck a vehicle driven by Jordan Rothman, 17, of 61 John Paul Ln., Coventry. Police said all three operators and Hartery's passengers, Melissa Alvarez, 37, and Cooper Alvarez, 2, also of 641 Pudding Hill Rd., Hampton, and Rothman's passenger, Kirsten Rothman, 43, also of 61 John Paul Ln., Coventry, were transported to Windham and Hartford hospitals for non-life threatening injuries. This case is under investigation.

## Marlborough Police News

2/21: State Police said Brandon F. McIntosh, 19, of 56 Acorn St., Windsor Locks, was charged with DUI, failure to drive right, and failure to stop on right for emergency vehicles.

# Restored Windows Coming to St. Peter's in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

The construction of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron was completed in 1826. Located at 30 Church St. – and the reason for the road's name – the church was built from bricks made in a local kiln and woodwork done by a local builder. According to the church website, when all was said and done Bishop Thomas Brownell, who consecrated the building, deemed it “the second most beautiful church in the diocese.”

Although some of the original structure is no longer there, like the Gothic battlements, turrets and pinnacles which didn't hold up in New England weather and were removed within 30 years, one of the early features still remains: the 11 stained glass windows that rise elegantly on each side of the church, erupting in color when the sun hits them the right way while allowing light to stream through the building.

And now, work is being done to ensure those windows remain where they are and receive some much needed TLC. They are, after all, nearing 200 years old.

Thomas Sayers, a parishioner at the church who has spearheaded a restoration project for the windows, explained this week he first realized they needed some attention while preparing for last Easter.

“There were some people, including my wife and I, decorating the church for Easter, putting flowers up, and somebody said we need to put a couple of flowers on the windowsill,” he stated. “So I grabbed a plant and went over to a sill.”

Although Sayers said he doesn't really know what made him glance up at the window, he did so, and realized the window was buckling and the glass was cracked. Upon further examination, he discovered it wasn't an isolated incident.

“Two were buckled, all of them had cracks and some had missing glass,” he said.

And so, he started asking questions and contacted companies that restore stained glass windows and discovered the buckling was a result of the deteriorating lead frames.

“The lead not only holds the glass pieces together but supports the window, so as they deteriorate all the weight is going down and that's causing the buckling and the cracking,” he said.

To fix the windows, each one will need to be removed and sent to a restoration company. The church chose Stained Glass Resources in Hampden, Mass., and has already sent along two windows to be restored. The process includes taking the window apart and repairing or replacing the fractured glass. If the restorers feel the glass can be repaired, they'll do so. If not, they'll replace the glass, utilizing their on-

site artists to paint the new glass to match what they're getting rid of.

“After all the repair work is done” Sayers furthered, “then they'll totally re-lead the window, put all the glass in the window and waterproof it,” thereby adding 80-100 more years to their life.

The focus is currently on eight of the 11 windows at the church – on the north and south sides – and the cost of repairs has been estimated between \$152,000 and \$154,000. Presently, \$52,000 in commitments have been made by parishioners.

Sayers explained each window has two sections, and a plaque will be put up in honor of, or memory of whomever funds a section or an entire window.

He called the project important because, well, it was better than the alternative.

“We have two options. One is to restore them, and the second is to leave them alone, and if we do leave them alone and not do anything, eventually they will be beyond restoring,” he said.

And with them would go some town – and state – history. One of the windows, Sayers shared, contains the inscription “Gov. John S. Peters, a liberal benefactor of this church.” Peters was the 11th lieutenant governor and 26th governor of Connecticut. He was born in Hebron in 1772, died in 1858 and was buried at the church.

Another window acknowledges General Andrew Welles, who was born in 1783 and died in 1850. Still another was given in memory of the Phelps family, whose descendents Sayers noted are still members of the church.

“As in most churches with stained glass windows, it was common practice at that time if there was somebody of importance, to give the window in memory of them,” Sayers explained. “All of these eight windows have been given that way.”

Sayers said he felt a major reason for the inclusion of stained glass windows in a church was their beauty, and St. Peter's rector, the Rev. Everett “Perry” Perine, furthered that point.

“Stained glass is part of the beauty of church buildings,” Perine said. “I think stained glass became a way not only of enhancing the space but of enhancing worship. It reflects something of the beauty of God's creation.”

Perine also said the windows were a tangible way to recognize benefactors of the church who have supported the parish. In addition, he explained, the tradition of stained glass windows dated back to the Middle Ages, when they were used for a bit of education as well as aesthetics.

“Originally the whole point, at least in Europe, was that you were dealing with illiterate



**The stained glass windows at St. Peter's Episcopal Church are in need of some attention; a project estimated to cost between \$152,000 and \$154,000 is currently underway to have the windows – which are almost 200 years old – restored, thereby ensuring their beauty remains intact for another 100 years.**

people in the Middle Ages,” he explained, “and windows and pictures were ways of getting across who we are as a people and stories.”

Perine continued, “It's a combination of added beauty, enhancing the liturgy of the church, but also as a way to give thanks to the people who have been important to the church in the past.”

Speaking on the restoration, Perine said he was excited about the project.

“It's always wonderful, I think, to be able to preserve things that, in the case of the windows, are part of the town of Hebron's history,” he stated. “We're really excited about that – we're excited we can do it and certainly excited about the support we've had from parishioners and the potential support we seem to be getting from outside the parish.”

And that support has extended to Town Hall, where Town Manager Andrew Tierney crafted a letter of support to accompany a grant application for up to \$15,000 from the Connecticut

Trust for Historic Preservation.

Tierney called the church “a treasured symbol of Hebron's fabric of life,” and said the restoration project “represents critical maintenance to preserve this treasure for the next 100 years.”

Tierney went on to say restoring the windows at St. Peter's would help with the town vision of “developing the town's economic vitality while sustaining the historic significance which is represented through our existing infrastructure.”

Tierney encouraged Connecticut Trust to fund the grant request, and acknowledged “the tremendous impact that St. Peter's has throughout Hebron and our surrounding communities” as represented through community dinners, collaborative programming, support of the town's youth programs and special celebrations.

For information on the restoration project, contact Perine at the church at 860-228-3244 or Sayers at 860-467-6580.

## Siminski Proposes \$27.71 Million RHAM Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

The numbers are in, and the initial proposal for the 2014-15 RHAM middle and high school budget is \$27,710,405 – an increase of 6.83 percent over the current year.

According to a presentation given by Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski at Monday's RHAM Board of Education meeting, 55 percent is for salaries. Based on their contracts, administrators will receive a 1.9 percent increase in the upcoming year; certified staff will receive a 0.5 percent general wage increase plus step while the non-certified staff contract is currently in negotiations.

Another 13.1 percent of the budget is for benefits; health insurance was calculated based on a 4 percent increase for the upcoming year, compared to over 13 percent for the current year, and was listed as increasing \$190,180.

Tuition accounts for 4.7 percent of the budget and includes the cost of school choice, which allows students to attend magnet, vocational agricultural, and technical schools at the expense of the district. Currently, 153 students attend these schools, but that number is estimated to drop in the 2014-15 year to 127. The cost for next year is expected to be \$419,880, down from \$456,475.

Other budget decreases include utilities, which are shown decreasing \$58,466; transportation, which decreases \$10,827; and heating oil, which decreases \$13,811.

The price of heating oil came in at \$2.99 per

gallon for the upcoming year, compared to \$3.08 in the current year, while the cost of bus fuel came in at \$3.04 per gallon, compared to \$3.16.

Along with health insurance, major increases in the spending proposal include: a \$360,649 increase in special education, an \$86,348 increase in textbooks, a \$53,081 increase in instructional supplies, a \$52,000 increase in operations and maintenance, and a \$300,240 increase in capital projects for a total of \$1,042,498 in increases.

Capital projects for the upcoming year include \$110,240 to work on the HVAC system in the media center and \$74,315 to work on the HVAC system in the science rooms. Another \$70,000 is listed for a new hot water heater and \$129,000 is listed to reseal the track.

In addition, an unexpected expenditure is before the board due to issues with more than 200 windows installed during the High School's construction. Although the windows are expected to be replaced by the manufacturer under warranty, installation is not included and while final numbers are not yet available, the cost is estimated to be more than \$125,000. (A related story on the windows appears below.)

Additional items were also included in the initial budget that go beyond what Siminski refers to as “the continuation budget,” or a budget that will allow the schools to continue on with the same level of programming.

These additions include \$109,830 for three special education paraprofessionals (which is a mandated increase), \$109,830 for three security concierges, \$39,608 to increase the part-time technology staff to full-time, \$38,245 for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) program implementation, \$2,000 to implement a Capital Fund, \$57,960 for an additional groundskeeper (ground maintenance was a hot topic last summer, as both parents and officials expressed concern over the state of various playing fields and the ability to adequately maintain the grounds at current staffing levels), \$9,550 for increased fertilization, and \$2,382 for increased irrigation maintenance.

To help offset some of the increase, a number of grant and non-grant revenue sources were listed, including \$342,392 in federal grants, \$586,273 in state grants and non-revenue sources such as \$833,437 from employee medical/dental premium cost share, an estimated \$130,000 generated from pay-for-play sports fees, and \$21,480 from rental income.

What each of the three RHAM towns – Hebron, Marlborough and Andover – pays is based on how many students from each town are enrolled at the two schools. If the budget were to pass as it was presented Monday, Hebron would be responsible for \$15,587,061, or 56.26 percent of the budget, a \$918,086 increase from the current year. As usual, Hebron

would be responsible for the largest percentage of RHAM spending, followed by Marlborough at 29.03 percent, which would amount to \$8,042,879, or an increase of \$730,440 from the current year. Andover would be responsible for 14.71 percent of the RHAM budget, which would amount to \$4,075,465, an increase of \$117,046 over the current year.

The “continuation budget,” Siminski said, would clock in at \$26,962,475 or a 3.92 percent over the current year; that would change the amount each town pays to \$15,166,275 for Hebron, \$7,825,755 for Marlborough and \$3,965,445 for Andover.

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Siminski's presentation Monday is hardly the end of the story as far as formulating next year's budget is concerned; there's still more work to be done. Now that the initial spending proposal has been presented, school board members have been tasked with looking over the numbers and submitting any questions to Siminski's office in advance of the next budget meeting, scheduled for Monday, March 3 at 6:30 p.m. at RHAM High School. RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie, Middle School Principal Mike Seroussi and Special Education Director Eric Protulis will be presenting.

For information on the budget, go to [reg8.k12.ct.us](http://reg8.k12.ct.us) and click on “Budget Info.”

# Obituaries

## Portland

### Joan C. Lyman

Joan C. Lyman, 80, beloved wife of the late Robert C. Lyman died Tuesday, Feb. 18, at Middlesex Hospital. Joan was born in Unity, Maine, on July 23, 1933, to Lyle and Faye (Stephenson) Cunningham.

When her parents worked at the Connecticut Valley Hospital Joan spent her time with the Simmons family of Middletown. Joan graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in Middletown, Class of 1951. Joan married Robert (Bob) C. Lyman in Middletown on Oct. 9, 1954. They made their home in Deep River until moving to Portland in 1959. Joan worked as a secretary for the Realtor Board in Middletown and later with the LaMalfa Agency in Portland.

Joan was predeceased by her husband in 1996, and her siblings, First Lieutenant David Packard, in 1943, Albert Packard, Eva "Pat" Huffman, and Ava Houston.

She is survived by her son Philip of Middletown, her daughter Lisa Flood and husband Patrick Flood of Woodbury, Vt., and grandchildren Caitlin of Grand Isle, Vt., Colin of Burlington, Vt., and Jonathan of Cruz Bay St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Family and friends are invited to pay their respects today, Feb. 28, at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, from 5-7 p.m. Her funeral service will be held Saturday, March 1, at 1 p.m., in South Congregational Church, 9 Pleasant St., Middletown. Everyone is asked to go directly to church. Burial will be private.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit [portlandmemorialfh.net](http://portlandmemorialfh.net).

## Colchester

### Mary E. Willwerth

Mary E. Willwerth, 86, of Colchester, passed away early Monday morning, Feb. 24, at home, with her family by her side. Born May 7, 1927, in Somerville, Mass., she was the daughter of the late Edward and Catherine (McCaffery) Kiley.

She married Robert Day Willwerth on Aug. 27, 1949. The couple shared 52 years of marriage before he predeceased her on June 19, 2001.

Mary was a devoted and loving wife, mother and grandmother who enjoyed making clothing for her family, crocheting quilts, cooking, gardening and painting. She was a member of the Connecticut Society of Decorative Painters and she was a communicant of St. Andrew Church where she formerly taught CCD.

Mary will be sadly missed but always remembered by her beloved seven children and their spouses, Jeanne Coull of Norwich, John and Angela Willwerth of Cromwell, Joanne Hayden of Seattle, Wash., Janet and Mark Denley of Lebanon, Jayne and Ron Yuchniuk of Durham, N.C., Jill and Robert Merrill of Colchester, Jennifer and Ralph DelSesto of Colchester; 18 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Calling hours will be held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Saturday, March 1, beginning at 12:30 p.m., with a memorial service following at the funeral home at 2 p.m. Burial will be at the convenience of the family in St. Andrew Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Bacon Academy Scholarship Fund, 611 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415.

For online expressions of sympathy, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Portland

### Jean Bastura

Jean (Kerop) Bastura, 94, of Portland, wife of the late Stanley Bastura Sr., died Saturday, Feb. 15, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born in Hartford, daughter of the late Philip and Frances (Belina) Kerop.

Prior to her retirement, Jean worked as a supervisor for the State of Connecticut Welfare Department. She was a member of the Connecticut State Employee Association and the Friends of Portland Library.

Jean is survived by her sons, Stanley Bastura Jr. and his wife, Susan, of East Hampton and Robert Bastura of Middletown; her daughter, Nancy Rubino and her husband, Michael, of Meriden; her grandchildren, Kristin Bengtson-Belin and her husband, Steve, and Kathryn Carrozza and her husband, Michael; her great-grandson Max Bengtson-Belin; and her "second daughter," Patricia Ponko of Durham.

Funeral services will be private and burial will be at the convenience of the family. There are no calling hours.

Biega Funeral Home has care of the arrangements. To share memories or express condolences online, visit [biegafuneralhome.com](http://biegafuneralhome.com).

## Colchester

### Susan G. Bragdon

Susan G. Bragdon, 55, our beloved wife, mother, sister, grandmother, aunt and friend, peacefully passed away Wednesday, Feb. 19, at her home in Colchester, surrounded by loved ones.

Born March 1, 1958, to the late Raymond H. and Donna G. (Chapdelaine) Arnold Sr., Susan was a 1976 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester. On July 12, 1980, she married Kenneth O. Bragdon Jr. and together they raised their three daughters.

A second mom to many, she was known as "Ma Sue." She was always willing to lend a helping hand, and she was very proud of her family. She will be greatly missed.

She is survived by her husband, Kenneth O. Bragdon Jr.; her daughters, Tonya Bragdon, Donna Bragdon and boyfriend David Ruley, and Karla Bragdon; her brother, Raymond H. Arnold Jr.; her granddaughter, MacKenzie Ruley; and numerous brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her brother, Scott E. Arnold.

Susan's family would like to express their gratitude to the doctors and staff at the William W. Backus Hospital.

Services will be held at the Montville Funeral Home of Church and Allen, on Route 32 in Uncasville, on Monday, March 3, from 6-8 p.m.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Montville Funeral Home of Church and Allen, c/o Susan G. Bragdon.

## East Hampton

### Elizabeth M. Roller

Elizabeth (Betty) M. Roller, 71, died unexpectedly Monday, Feb. 24, at her home. Born Jan. 5, 1943, in Middletown, she was the daughter of the late Burnice and Irene (White) Guile.

Betty was a lifelong resident of East Hampton, and moved to Portland in 1992. She worked at the Bevin Bell Manufacturing Company, from where she retired. Betty taught Sunday school at the East Hampton Bible Church and the East Hampton Congregational Church and was a member of the East Hampton VFW Women's Auxiliary.

Elizabeth is survived by her three sons, David, Scott and Shawn Wright; her daughter, Sherri Mann and her husband Everett; a brother, Charles Fuller; three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her brother, James Guile.

Family and friends are invited to pay their respects Saturday, March 1, at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, from 9-11 a.m.

Donations in memory of Mrs. Roller may be made to The Portland Food Bank, 7 Waverly Ave., Portland CT 06480 – 860-342-6795 – or the Adopt A Cat Foundation, [adoptacatfoundation.org](http://adoptacatfoundation.org).

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit [portlandmemorialfh.net](http://portlandmemorialfh.net).

## Portland

### Anthony Camp

Anthony (Bob) Camp, 96, of Devon, passed away unexpectedly Friday, Feb. 14. He was born in Portland Nov 29, 1917.

He was predeceased by his wife Lillian, brothers Edward, John and Walter Camp, sisters Irene Alicandro and Jean Stevens. He is survived by daughter Louise and family in Florida, Victor and Raymond Braese of Devon, and several nieces and nephews.

He worked at Sikorsky Aircraft and retired after 30 years. He was a kind and gentle man and loving uncle who will be greatly missed.

Services were private.

## Marlborough

### Lloyd L. Folsom Jr.

Lloyd L. Folsom Jr., 55, of Marlborough, beloved husband of Tammy (King) Folsom, died unexpectedly Wednesday, Feb. 19. He was born Aug. 22, 1958, in Hartford, the son of Lloyd L. Folsom Sr. and the late Jacqueline (DeLong) Folsom.

Lloyd grew up in East Granby and Hebron and was a graduate of RHAM High School in 1978. Lloyd was president of Folsom Construction in South Windsor, a business he started in 1990. He was a member and current board member of the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut.

Lloyd was a kind and generous man who enjoyed helping others. He donated to and supported the Connecticut Special Olympics, Hebron Harvest Fair, Wapping Fair and the Jim Calhoun Celebrity Golf Tournament, to name a few. Lloyd was instrumental in helping to put in place a piece of steel for the 911 Memorial at the Connecticut Fire Academy and donated time, equipment and staff for the Hartford Distributors Memorial in Manchester.

Lloyd was an avid golfer and enjoyed playing at Ellington Ridge Country Club and was a current member of the Gainey Ranch Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz.

A kind, caring, generous and loving man, he will be greatly missed by all.

Along with his wife and best friend, Tammy, of over nine years, and his father, Lloyd L. Folsom Sr., and Eileen Colletti of Manchester, he leaves his brother, Clayton Folsom and his wife Cheryl of Andover and their children, Christina, Catherine and Cynthia; his sister, Beth Lyon and her husband Jeff of Groton and their daughter, Rachel; his uncle, Charles Folsom, his aunt, Gertrude "Jennie" Shory, both of Maine; his aunts, Marie Kronfeld of Minnesota, Betty Chaplan and Chavala Moran, both of Maine; his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, John and Jean King of South Carolina, Robert and Sandy Bagge of Cape Cod, Paul and Leslie Walsh of Kensington and Dorian and Robyn Barja of Georgia.

His family received friends Sunday, Feb. 23, at the Samsel & Carmon Funeral Home, 419 Buckland Rd., South Windsor. A funeral service was held Monday, Feb. 24, at Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St., Hebron. Burial followed in the New Hebron Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made memory of Lloyd to a charity that will honor his mother, Jacqueline, whom he loved deeply: American Cancer Society, 825 Brook St., I-91 Tech Ctr., Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

Visit [carmonfuneralhome.com](http://carmonfuneralhome.com) for online condolences and a guestbook.

## Portland

### Rodney B. Backman

It is with a heavy heart that we announce that Rodney B. Backman, 88, of Portland, passed away at Water's Edge Center for Health & Rehabilitation on Wednesday, Feb. 19. Rodney was born Dec. 10, 1925, and was a lifelong resident of Portland.

He graduated from Portland High School as an accomplished athlete who played many sports, including soccer, basketball and baseball. Also a player for the Portland Dukes, Rodney was considered one of the best athletes in his hometown, even being offered the chance to try out for minor league baseball. He was inducted into the Portland Sports Hall of Fame for his many athletic achievements.

Rodney served in the U.S. Navy for three years on the *USS Randolph*, an aircraft carrier that was granted three battle stars and served in the South Pacific. He married his beloved wife of 66 years, Millicent "Mickey" (Stevens) Backman, on Sept. 6, 1947. He was employed at Standard-Knapp in Portland for 43 years and enjoyed his years coaching Little League baseball and pee-wee football.

In addition to his loving wife, Rodney will be dearly missed by his two sisters, Joyce Nelson of Cromwell and Faith Hall of Florida; his four sons, Bruce Backman and his wife Janice Olson of Portland, Keith Backman and his wife Paula of Old Saybrook, Kevin Backman of Portland and Brett Backman and his wife Kathy of Middletown; his five adored grandchildren, who all lovingly referred to him as "Pa," Ryan Backman and his wife Jonna, Travis Backman and his wife Ashley, Erica Backman Janson and her husband Keith, Brittany Backman and Blaire Backman; and his five special great-grandchildren, Maddox, Liam, Carter, Alyssa and Ava.

He was predeceased by his brother, Neil Pierce; his sister, Lois Wholley and his cherished granddaughter, Brooke Olivia Backman.

Funeral services and burial will be private and there are no calling hours.

Donations in Rodney's memory may be made to the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), 156 Prospect St., Middletown, CT 06457.

The D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, Wethersfield is handling arrangements. For online expressions of sympathy to the family, visit [desopo.com](http://desopo.com).

## Portland

### Anita Aletta

Anita "Nettie" (Riccardi) Aletta, of Portland, died peacefully Sunday, Feb. 23, surrounded by her family. She was the loving wife of the late Frank "Hotsy" Aletta for 55 wonderful years.

Anita was born April 26, 1922, the daughter of the late Lucy (Parisi) and Michael Riccardi of Middletown. She graduated from Middletown High School in 1944. She was proud to have contributed to the World War II effort by working at four plants of Pratt & Whitney Aircraft while her husband served in the European Theater for the U.S. Army. Later in life, she worked at Fenner America as a credit union secretary.

She had been a resident of Portland since the 1950s, where she raised her children and assisted raising her grandchildren. She devoted her life to her family and many close friends. She was happiest when she was cooking, feeding and caring for the people she loved. Anita enjoyed hosting and playing her Friday night poker games for many years. She loved her frequent trips to the casino and playing the slots. In her later years, she looked forward to daily rummy games with her sister Margaret.

She sat for hours on her front porch admiring her flowers. She was very proud of her home and her yard and always enjoyed cleaning and decorating. She was the glue that held our family together. She was dearly loved and will be missed by all who knew her.

Anita is survived by her twin sister and best friend, Margaret Riccardi of Portland; her son, Robert Aletta of Portland; her son, Frank Aletta and his wife Marisa of Middletown; and her daughter, Donna Glynn and her husband Timothy of Portland. She leaves behind her loving grandchildren Scott J. Chappell, Jessica (Chappell) McBrien, Michael Aletta, Danielle Aletta and Brett Aletta, and several nieces and nephews, including Lucille Leonard of Portland and Richard Pestritto of Portland. She also leaves behind a loving sister-in-law, Josephine Vonella of Bristol.

Besides her parents and husband, Anita was predeceased by her brothers, Jesse, Anthony and Patrick Riccardi, and her sisters, Marie Taylor, Carmelina "Millie" Pestritto and Ann "Natha" Riccardi.

Anita's family would like to extend their gratitude to the staff at Portland Care and Rehab, who watched over her so tenderly the last few months of her life when her needs became greater than her family could provide.

Her funeral service was held Wednesday, Feb. 26, in St. Mary Church, Portland. Burial followed in St. Sebastian Cemetery, Middletown.

In lieu of flowers donations in memory of Anita may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, Connecticut Chapter, 2075 Silas Deane Hwy., Ste. 100, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. To send an online expression of sympathy, please visit [portlandmemorialfh.net](http://portlandmemorialfh.net).

Colchester

## Norman G. Picard

Norman G. Picard, 82, a resident of Simsbury and formerly of Lisbon, passed away Monday morning, Feb. 24, at Harrington Court Nursing Home in Colchester. He was the beloved husband of the late Jacqueline (Armstrong) Picard.

Norman was born Sept. 15, 1931, in Ste Anne New Brunswick, Canada, the son of Simon and Irene (Ringuette) Picard. He had resided for many years in the Norwich area moving from the greater Hartford community.

Norman had been a resident of Lisbon since 2001 and had within the past year made his home in Simsbury. He was an accomplished self-employed Master Upholsterer. Norman was a member of Germania Lodge No. 11 in Norwich and a communicant at Saint Joseph's Church in Occum. He enjoyed coaching Little League Baseball and umpiring. He was an avid billiards player and also enjoyed bowling.

Norman married the former Jacqueline (Armstrong) Bower Sept. 18, 1999, at Saint Peter & Paul Church in Norwich; Jacky predeceased him Sept. 8, 2012. Norman also was predeceased by his first wife, Joan A. Wilcox, in 1991.

He is survived by his daughter, Noreen Picard, and her husband Paul Miliard of East Hampton; his son, Kenneth Picard, and his wife Cheryl of Simsbury; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Norman also leaves his six step-children, Michael Bower and his wife Lynne of Broadbrook, Thomas Bower and his wife Cheryl of Norwich, Barbara Bower Welles and her husband Jordan of Old Lyme, Margaret Bower of Saugus, Mass., Anne Crump and her husband James of Methuen, Mass., and Marie Hyfield and her husband Christopher of South Portland, Maine, and 10 step-grandchildren.

Graveside services will be privately held in Saint Mary's Cemetery in East Hartford.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Norman's name to Saint Joseph's Church, 11 Baltic Rd., Occum, CT 06360-9461 or to a charity of the donor's choice.

Arrangements by the Robinson, Wright & Weymer Funeral Home in Centerbrook. To share a memory of Norman or leave a condolence for his family please visit [rwwfh.com](http://rwwfh.com).

*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

While breakfast out at a real, sit-down restaurant, where they bring you coffee and can make you omelets or French toast or French toast *inside* of an omelet (I'm a frequenter of Cosmic Omelet in Manchester; I wouldn't be shocked if they did that one of these days), is a terrific experience, I do admit I enjoy sampling different fast food breakfasts from time to time. So I was intrigued when I saw this week Taco Bell is about to enter the breakfast world.

The Mexican-themed fast food chain will roll out its breakfast menu nationally late next month. Among its offerings will be a waffle taco – which will feature scrambled eggs, sausage or bacon, and cheese, in a waffle shell shaped to look like a taco. It'll come with syrup to drizzle on top. The syrup isn't my style – I love syrup on waffles, but on eggs and sausage? No thanks – but what I really have questions about is the waffle shell.

From the photos I've seen, it's bent and folded to look like a taco shell. Waffles aren't supposed to be able to bend. If it bends, you've got a soggy waffle (which waffle connoisseurs will know is just plain disappointing). So I'm a little skeptical.

Another new offering, though, the A.M. Crunchwrap, sounds more appealing. It's scrambled eggs, hash browns, melted cheese, and bacon, sausage or steak, all wrapped up in a tortilla and grilled.

While that sounds tastier to me, I'm not holding my breath either offering will be mind-boggling. I'll have to see how it goes. A lot depends on the eggs; eggs can be tricky for fast-food joints. Probably my favorite fast-food breakfast sandwich is the Egg McMuffin from McDonald's – and a lot of that has to do with the fact you can tell it's a real poached egg. It's not a folded over egg-type thing like Burger King and other fast food places use – including, I admit, McDonald's, on its non-McMuffin sandwiches. And don't even get me started on those egg wafer-type things Dunkin' Donuts has (my body got along better with those before the egg wafer was switched to this new not-quite-a-fried-egg-but-hey-it-kinda-looks-the-part thing they use now – but even those weren't that great.)

So I'm intrigued. I doubt Taco Bell's new offerings will be anything to write home about, but it's a new concept, and I'm curious to see how they'll be.

\* \* \*

From the “now I've seen everything” department: A Farmington Public Schools employee resigned Sunday after New York police charged him with attempting to have sex with a cow, while another person videotaped it.

According to the *Hartford Courant*, Reid A. Fontaine, 31, was an information technology network specialist for the Farmington schools, and he attempted to have sex with a cow on a farm in Herkimer, N.Y. Fontaine was arrested Friday, along with Michael H. Jones, 35, of Ilion, N.Y. Both men face charges of sexual misconduct.

The incident was discovered by a farmer who, police said, set up a video camera in his barn, to try to determine why his cows were acting anxious and not producing milk as usual. The farmer then called police, after seeing the video of the alleged sexual assault of the cow.

Pranks are one thing, but that's just sick.

\* \* \*

Earlier this month, legendary baseball an-

nouncer Ralph Kiner, who'd called Mets games on TV and radio since the team's inception in 1962, passed away at the age of 91. I grew up watching Kiner and Tim McCarver do the Mets games for WWOR Channel 9 out of New York (the games were simulcast here in Connecticut by WTXN Channel 20), and always enjoyed listening to him. He was a great player for the Pirates in the '40s and '50s, leading the National League in home runs each of his first seven seasons in the game, so there was no doubt in my mind he knew whereof he spoke.

Kiner had slowed down a bit in recent years; he'd usually only do a handful of games a season, and those for only a few innings at a time. But it was always great to see him, and to hear him share stories.

Spending more than 50 years behind the microphone, Kiner became known for some, well, malapropisms over the years. Yogi Berra gets all the press when it comes to baseball players with unique ways with words, and it's understandable, but Kiner was no slouch in the “what did he just say?” department. I recently came across a list of some of the best “Kiner-isms” from over the years, and thought I'd share some of them:

“All of his saves have come in relief appearances.”

“All of the Mets road wins against the Dodgers this year occurred at Dodger Stadium.”

“Darryl Strawberry has been voted to the Hall of Fame five years in a row.”

“He's going to be out of action the rest of his career.”

“If Casey Stengel were alive today, he'd be spinning in his grave.”

“It's Father's Day, so we'd like to wish all fathers out there a happy birthday.”

“Solo homers usually come with no one on base.”

“Sutton lost 13 games in a row without winning a ballgame.”

“The Hall of Fame ceremonies are on the thirty-first and thirty-second of July.”

“The Mets have gotten their leadoff batter on only once this inning.”

“The reason the Mets have played so well at Shea this year is they have the best home record in baseball.”

“There's a lot of heredity in that family.”

“Tony Gwynn was named player of the year for April.”

But, as is the case with Yogi, these quotes by no means indicate Kiner was a fool. Indeed, he knew more about baseball than most people can possibly hope to. He's also responsible for the classic line stressing the worth of a great player as opposed to a merely good one:

“Singles hitters drive Fords; home run hitters drive Cadillacs.”

Due to injury, Kiner's playing career was relatively short (10 years), but illustrious; when he retired, his 369 career homers put him sixth on the all-time list. He was the brightest light on some lousy Pirates teams. In fact, the Pirates' futility during that time led to a classic quote *about* Kiner: the team's general manager, balking at a payraise Kiner was requesting, told him, “We finished last with you, and we can finish last without you!”

There's no doubt, though, the baseball world is a little worse off without Kiner in it. He'll be missed.

\* \* \*

See you next week.