

RIVEREAST

## News Bulletin

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**He Could Go All the Way... Brandon Anderson (12) caught eight passes for over 300 yards and four touchdowns in Bacon Academy's victorious 52-7 home opener last Saturday. A full story appears on page 31. Photo by Linda Akerman Shoemaker.**

## Belltown Comes Together for Clarks

by John Tyczkowski

Last Friday morning, a house fire changed one East Hampton family's life in an instant.

A police officer noticed smoke coming from the northwest side of Lake Pocotopaug around 10:30 a.m. last Friday. As the call went out, however, some elements of East Hampton's fire department were present in Portland at the time battling another house fire.

"Luckily, we had wrapped up things in Portland by then and were able to respond quickly, we had trucks responding almost immediately from the firehouse and from there," Ken McGahee, East Hampton's assistant fire chief, who was present at the scene, said. "We got up [to Ola Avenue], and it turned out to be personal friends of ours; pretty much everyone in town knows the Clarks."

The log cabin was the home of Dave and Karen Clark, and their two children, Angelina and Derek. Karen Clark is a daughter of Paul and the late Sandy Peszynski, of Paul's and Sandy's Too, the hardware and garden store that is as much a fixture of East Hampton as the Peszynski family itself.

McGahee said there were also certain logistical issues involved in fighting the fire, which was at a house located far back from the lake and from the main road.

"We don't have any hydrants there, so we utilize lakes and ponds," he said. "We used an underground pipe to get water from the lake,

and ended up having to run 1,700 feet of five-inch line off the apparatus up this steep hill to the house."

While McGahee said a 20-pound propane tank on the scene exploded, the larger propane tank in the back did not explode. He did say that firefighters had to keep the second tank cool to keep it from exploding, per the tank's design, which they did successfully.

McGahee said neither propane tank was the cause of the fire.

Ultimately, McGahee said, the house was a "total loss."

While none of the Clarks were home at the time of the fire, "they lost everything, and they also lost several dogs and cats," McGahee said. "One dog escaped, though, and we found it in the woods behind the house."

McGahee said the blaze was under control in "under two hours," and that by 1:30 p.m. he turned the scene over to the fire marshal's office.

"They understand that it started from a dishwasher," McGahee said. "It turns out there was a recall on the dishwasher in the house."

McGahee said that according to the fire marshal, the dishwasher's heating element was defective, and from there, the fire in dishwasher burned through the bottom of the machine, through the sub-floor and burned the house's

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## Residents Ask to Clear RHAM Coach's Name

by Geeta Schrayter

At Monday's RHAM Board of Education meeting, a number of individuals continued to express their desire for the board to publicly clear the name of Coach Tim Guernsey.

Last year, in a series of anonymous letters, Guernsey was accused of being a bully who behaved unprofessionally. At a board meeting held last November to determine how to address the issue, dozens of students, parents and community members spoke in support of the coach; most felt the letters should be considered invalid due to their anonymity.

However, in spite of that, the board decided that night to retain legal counsel to investigate the allegations; said investigation ended quietly in March, with no action taken.

But on Monday, those present felt that quiet conclusion wasn't enough, and expressed their desire for the board to stand up and publicly support the coach.

Many who spoke mentioned an online search of Guernsey's name brings up articles on the accusations before anything else, and said the board should release a statement that publicly cleared Guernsey – or even host a press conference.

"We in this room know the outcome from the board's one sentence 'no action will be taken,'" said Hebron resident Kelly Stone. "But the public and the media have not been made

aware. And seriously, 'no action will be taken' is not even close to what the statement should be. How about, 'Tim has been cleared of all false accusations in the anonymous letters submitted.' Why aren't you as a board celebrating and making it known that your employee is in fact a teacher and coach of integrity and a quality school employee?"

Missie Carlson felt similarly. Although her daughter graduated from RHAM, she said she continued to come before the board "because we support Tim Guernsey."

"We feel strongly there should be a letter put in his file," she stated, adding, "I'll say it, and I've said it before, we should have called the bluff on the anonymous letters. Why do we investigate anonymous letters? If we called it a bluff and they were going to sue the board, then we would have known who you were dealing with and maybe none of this would have happened."

Also present at the meeting was Guernsey's wife Jennifer, who spoke with a shaky voice and fought back tears as she detailed what her family had been through.

"It's been a long road," she stated. "I'm here tonight to let you know how a decision that you made almost one year ago has changed my family's life."

Jennifer explained that, for an educator like

herself, and a coach such as her husband, "One of the things you work towards and take pride in is your reputation and being a good role model for your students and your student athletes."

Due to that, she continued, "You can imagine how difficult and damaging it was to read those anonymous letters containing fictitious and malicious accusations of my husband's personality, actions and overall character."

Jennifer went on to talk about how the media came to their house one day where their two children, ages 4 and 7, "were extremely confused, scared and crying."

She also shared instances where individuals weren't aware of the investigation's outcome, and assumed Guernsey had lost his job.

In addition, she said, a classmate searching for Guernsey for a reunion in New York found the accusations online and asked Guernsey's sister when they next spoke, "What happened to your brother?"

On another occasion, Jennifer said a 6-year-old came up to Guernsey as he volunteered at a basketball game and said, "Hey, I saw you on TV!"

"You have been able to turn the page, look the other way, and possibly even forget what has happened," Jennifer addressed the board. "But we are still living this – very much still –

every single day of our lives."

Jennifer asked that the school board "show some sort of respect and care for an innocent person" through, for example, "A simple written statement or comment to help us find closure in this unfortunate situation we are in; a comment sharing the fact these letters were found unsubstantiated, and that maybe, just maybe, you too are glad he can continue to teach, coach and have a positive impact on the people in this community."

After Jennifer, more individuals spoke seeking the same response – however, as comments continued, they also expressed frustration at the lack of any response from the board.

"You're all still just staring out here aimlessly: it's getting old," said Hebron resident Glenn Veilleux.

"How do we get answers?" Carlson inquired, "Because we're all talking and nobody's giving us any answers."

A number of voices in the audience overlapped as those sentiments continued. "We've been talking for ten months" one woman stated, while Veilleux added, "why can't any of you speak?" and another said, "Can you just answer us? Just talk to us!"

Finally, school board vice chairman Kevin Williams piped up and explained how most

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beams.

\* \* \*

McGahee said he has been especially impressed by how the community came together for the family in the wake of the house fire.

The Clarks “had the clothes on their back and that was it. But fortunately friends and the community came together for them,” McGahee said. “Someone happened to have a completely furnished house, and they set them up there that first night. They had a roof over their heads.”

“It’s just huge for a community to turn around like that in such a short time, and say ‘Here we are, what do you need?’” he said.

Quentin Walton, a longtime friend of David and Karen, said he believes the fire will only strengthen them.

“Dave and Karen are strong-willed individuals,” he said. “It’s not going to defeat them, they’ll move on more resilient and even stronger.”

Walton also emphasized how selfless David and Karen are.

“Dave is one of those guys who’ll drop everything and help you,” Walton said. “If your car broke down and you were out there, he’d be the first one there with his hands under the hood. And Karen’s the same way, especially with the great work she’s done to honor her mother with the Sandy Peszynski Breast Cancer Foundation, she works tirelessly at that.

“I’m honored to have them as friends.”

Walton also said that the success of the fundraising pages was a “testament to Dave and Karen and how they fit into to a community of 13,000 people.”

“It’s not about me or Deb,” he said. “It’s really what Dave and Karen do in the community, how much they’re respected, and how it’s coming back to them.”

He said the Clarks are private people, and that they, as well as he himself, were “very overwhelmed” with the community’s outpouring of support.

“I speak for Dave on this one. Dave’s not the one to ever ask for help, because he’s the one who’s always giving help,” Walton said. “[Last] Friday, he was put in a very awkward position because he’s never been on that side of things; he’s always helping people on that side of things.”

“I told them that ‘people want to help you, because you’ve done so much for the community. If anything, it’s reassuring you that when you do good things, good things come back to

you,’” Walton said. “That’s what I told them.”

The page Walton started on [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com) had, as of press time, raised almost \$8,500 for the family, out of a \$25,000 goal, from the donations of 86 people. The page has also been shared over 600 times on Facebook.

“I felt helpless when I heard the news and I was at work,” he said. “If you had asked me whether I’d rather stay at work and set up a fund for Dave and Karen, or leave to go be by their side, I would have rather been there with them, during this.”

Walton said that he had been a firefighter in town for 23 years, and while that had given him a feel for situations like this, he had never dealt with it this close to home.

“I don’t know what [the Clarks] are going through first-hand, but I’ve seen enough of it to know that there’s nothing anyone can say or do,” he said. “You’ve lost everything...10, 12 years of your life is gone; all those memories you can’t get back.”

Walton also said that he emphasized the town’s own effort when he talked to Dave and Karen after the fire.

“I tried to comfort them when I talked to them and I said ‘You’ve got each other, and you’ve got a whole town backing you,’” Walton said. “This community is proving as it has, time and time again, that small town America is still here. It has always taken care of its own; there’s always someone for you to lean on and support you when you can’t stand on your own.”

Another East Hampton resident, Deb McKinney, also started a fundraising page on [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com). As of press time, the page has raised around \$11,000 toward its \$30,000 donation goal, from 140 people. The page has been shared on Facebook over 900 times, and has been tweeted 15 times.

However, McKinney said in an email that she also wants the focus to remain on the Clark family.

“All Quentin and I did was set the wheels in motion – the rest has been the outpouring of the community, which is a testament to what this entire family means to our ‘village,’” McKinney said. “All that matters is that it’s all going to the same place, to Karen and Dave’s family, to get them started in re-building, restocking and trying to get life back to ‘normal’ for them and the kids as fast as we can.”

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Those interested in donating online can visit Walton’s page at [gofundme.com/eqs3d0](http://gofundme.com/eqs3d0), and McKinney’s page at [gofundme.com/eqsc38](http://gofundme.com/eqsc38).

**Residents Ask cont. from Front Page**

boards have a format similar to the RHAM board’s – where public comment is accepted but the board doesn’t engage in back and forth dialogue. He explained this was to allow everyone to express their comments, and because the board is bound by certain legal restrictions that determine what they can and can’t say.

Williams added that, in order to get answers to questions, the best channel to go through would be the school administration – “ultimately the superintendent.”

He furthered, “This board has specific powers but they are not unlimited. We are constrained, in essence, to policy and working with the administration making sure they have the tools they need to do their jobs.”

Williams added he – along with the rest of the board – took the issue with Guernsey seriously, “so the fact that we are not giving specific answers typically means that we cannot.”

In addition, when asked whether the board was legally bound to *not* issue a statement regarding Guernsey, Williams answered, “I’m saying that under the current circumstances and what this board has been through from a legal

perspective, the board is not in a position to release an official statement.”

“Then who is?” Carlson asked. “You were in the position to say ‘no action,’ you were in the position to have the investigation go forward – but not you’re not in a position [to issue a statement]?”

But the board offered no further comment.

On Wednesday, schools superintendent Bob Siminski said, like Williams, that he couldn’t comment specifically on Guernsey or whether or not there were plans to address the matter further.

He did say however, that Williams was correct in directing anyone with questions to the administration, and stated he’d answer them to the best of his ability.

“I’ll do the best I can to answer what I can,” he said, adding the public should understand “in some instances [answers] might be vague.”

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The next RHAM Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 20 at 6:30 p.m.

**East Hampton Police News**

9/4: Wojciech Rembiszewski, 22, of 9 Davis St., New Britain, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, East Hampton Police said.

9/8: Andrzej Romanowski, 55, of 19 Curry Ln., was arrested for DUI, following too close and failure to drive right, police said.

9/12: Shelley A. Briere, 32, of 139 Johnson Rd., Tolland, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, misuse of plates and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

9/13: Police said Ellen C. Brunsgaard, 23, of 24 Tarragon Dr., was arrested for driving under suspension, failure to drive right, possession of narcotics, possession of heroin and possession of drug paraphernalia.

9/15: Andrzej Romanowski, 55, 19 Curry Ln., was arrested for driving under the influence, failure to drive right and disobeying an officer signal, police said.

9/16: Michael Cannata, 35, of 70 Colchester Ave., was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and traveling unreasonably fast, police said.

9/16: Police said Christopher A. Scaplin, 29, of no certain address was arrested for disorderly conduct, violation of a protective order and unlawful restraint.

9/18: Kevin L. Foye, 50, of 164 Grand St., Middletown was issued a ticket for traveling unreasonably fast and then arrested pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest from Middletown Police Department, police said.

9/19: Joseph Henry Lachappelle, 28, of 190 East High St., Apt. 1, was arrested for third-degree assault, second-degree breach of peace, and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

9/19: Tiffany Norman, 28, of 190 East High St., Apt. 1 was issued a summons for disorderly conduct and third-degree criminal mischief, said police.

**Colchester Police News**

9/16: State Police said that Khasan Azizov, 28, of 758 Union St., Springfield, Mass., was arrested and charged with failure to meet insurance requirements, speeding over 70 m.p.h., and improper use of markers.

9/16: State Police said that Joseph Fazzino, 22, of 195 Falls Lane, Rockfall, was arrested and charged with possession of heroin.

9/17: State Police said that Vivianet Vazquez, 28, of 330 Jeffery Rd., was arrested and charged with threatening and breach of

peace.

9/20: State Police said that Arthur Conklin, 61, of 98 Flatbrook Rd., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with DUI, drinking while driving and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

9/21: State Police said that Adam Desautels, 19, whom police would not provide the address for, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right.

**Marlborough Police News**

9/18: State Police said that Stephen Krupp, 46, of 51 Williamsburg Rd., sustained minor injuries after he struck a tree on Flood Road at around 7 a.m. Police said Krupp was transported to the Marlborough Clinic for his injuries.

9/22: State Police said that Summer Brooks, 35, of New London, was arrested and charged with DUI.

# Colchester to Make Horses and Ponies Tax-Exempt

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Pending the approval of policy language, the town's selectmen is all hooves on deck for the tax exemption of horses and ponies in town.

During its meeting on Sept. 18, the Board of Selectmen seriously considered the tax exemption after learning that the town makes only \$300 a year on the tax.

"Horses are the last animal to be taxable," Tax Assessor John Chaponis told the board. "We send out delinquent notices sometimes for \$15 or \$20."

As the tax states now, the first \$1,000 of a horse's value is exempt and owners have to pay tax on the remaining amount, which many times ends up being a very small amount. Chaponis went on to say people seem to resent having to pay such a small figure; the tax, he said, creates "lots of traffic in the office and nothing is a positive interaction."

Currently, other towns in the state have passed or are considering similar tax exemptions, including Lebanon, Cromwell and Durham. The tax exemption, Chaponis said, encourages agriculture in town, as horses require farmland, and thus "people keep the property and don't develop."

Another possible benefit – though Chaponis didn't specifically label it as such – is that the exemption would save assessors from trying to figure out how much a horse is worth. Asses-

sors, he quipped, "don't know how to evaluate horses."

The board will return to the idea during its next scheduled meeting to discuss possible language for the tax exemption.

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Also at the meeting, town tax collector Donald Philips reported to the board regarding his research into online bill pay vendors.

"I'm down to two vendors that work with our software," Philips said. "I want to have the service in place for when January bills are due."

The service would allow residents to go online and pay their bills instead of having to mail in checks or go to the tax collector's office.

"It would make paying taxes a little less painful," Philips said. "We would have a direct link on our site and make sure it's secure."

Philips said he did a 90-minute demonstration on one and a self-guided demonstration on the other. He will be reporting back to the board once he has narrowed down the vendors.

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The board also approved the Clean Energy Communities Pledge – a pledge to reduce the town's municipal energy building consumption by at least 20 percent by 2018. There would be incentives for reducing it, such as applying for Bright Idea Grants from the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund.

"It's a pledge, not a contract," First Selectman Stan Soby pointed out.

Public Works Director James Paggioli said the town is already conserving energy, but this is a way to gain incentives. Paggioli went on to say how 100 municipalities have already taken the pledge and that the suppliers are mirroring it.

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In other news, the board authorized Colchester Youth Services to contract with the Rushford Center for substance abuse counseling. It also approved the senior center's lease and accepted the Emergency Management Performance Grant. The grant will go toward many security improvements the town has made.

Recently during the emergency planning meeting, Soby said they put in equipment in Town Hall, attended the active shooter drill in Middletown to learn about the process, and they are evaluating Bacon Academy for its ability to evacuate students in wheelchairs. The town also purchased trauma kits.

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The board also discussed the frequent vandalism at the Spray Park, with non-residents using the park and the possibility of having someone monitor the park next year to keep an eye on things.

Selectman Bill Curran spoke about some

concerns he's having with the Plan of Conservation and Development draft.

"One of the things that's striking to me is the projected change of population," Curran said. "If their numbers are reasonable, they're saying Colchester will not be a growing town; it will be more of a retirement community."

Curran referred to part of the draft that stated by 2020, Colchester will increase by only 1,100 people and that number will drop to 800 and after the following decade, only 500 new people will come to town.

The Planimetrics group, which is putting together the POCD, is "stating that the growth point is leveling off," Curran said. "The assumption is that the population mix will switch and we will have more 55-and-older residents. It's a warning sign to me."

Curran stated that if this switch is true then the services the town would need to provide have to change. For example, with the Economic Development Commission currently having issues making quorum, the board discussed changing the amount of members on the commission to better serve the town.

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The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 2, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

## Colchester School Board Embarks on Strategic Plan Journey

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

After a presentation Tuesday night, the Board of Education agreed to move forward with developing a new five-year strategic plan.

According to board chairman Ron Goldstein, the last plan was updated six years ago and was in need of being redone. At the request of schools superintendent Jeffry Mathieu, a representative of the LEARN Regional Educational Service Center, Doreen Marvin, presented to the board.

"This process is designed to determine the foundation to run the district over the next several years," Goldstein said. "It's a significant project for the board."

"You have the opportunity to influence what you'd like in the future, instead of trying to predict the future and get on the treadmill," Marvin told the board, adding that you can't always guess changes that are coming down the pike – particularly at the state level. "Five years ago, who would have thought where we would be right now?"

Marvin also touched on the dip in enrollment the school system has experienced in recent years.

"You have a declining enrollment so there is the opportunity for what you can do more creatively" to attract people to the school system, and away from private or magnet schools,

Marvin said.

Marvin suggested that the board first develop a steering committee to bounce ideas off of and "take the temperature" of the work coming out of the process.

The idea is that the process will begin now with the creation of the steering committee and move on to surveys, public meetings, meeting with community groups, analyzing the data and draft of the plan by April for a first reading. Marvin said they would piggyback with existing surveys to add in a few questions, but not over survey the population. They will also plan two large community meetings in the fall and try and use people's time efficiently.

The district's previous plan was from 2006, and the board mentioned how different of a process it went through back then.

"This model is a little different than with previous plans," Mathieu said. "We used to have multiple Saturdays of hundreds of people [meeting to develop a plan]."

Michael Egan, a board member that remembers the last process, said this process allows for more "engagement and community."

"You're engaging feedback from the community, which is important," Egan said. "It's a better process to getting that than the previous process." Egan went on to say how this process

allows the board to ask the community what their vision is for the district and where they're taking the students.

Marvin said the draft of the plan may help inform the budget process for next year as it can show general trends; however, she stressed, it is not to be used as a basis for budget decisions.

"You begin to think about priorities for budget for next year," Marvin said.

Marvin also made it clear that when the plan references resources that these resources are not limited to monetary resources. Resources can be a variety of things such as surveying where students are a few years after graduation to better understand where the students are going and what they are getting up to.

"We give you goals, action items that you create, a call to action, all the specifications from the community, notes from every meeting we go to, as well as the analysis of the survey," Marvin said. "The document should be a living document and something to massage as time goes on, not just leave on the shelf."

The board discussed the possibility that it reviews the plan once a year to determine how things are going and where they're headed.

"It's always a good idea to have a birthday for each year of the plan," Marvin said. "Your

agenda items are already driven by your current plan and that's a wonderful practice."

The board voted to go forward with LEARN, and will be forming their steering committee soon.

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At the meeting, the board also voted to approve an application for a school security competitive grant which would give the district back 67 percent of money they have already spent on school security.

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Mathieu highlighted his new Twitter account (@cpssupt) to improve communication with the community. His overarching theme is to involve parents in all the grades of the district, not just their child's. Mathieu has been visiting all the schools and encouraging student and teacher tweets with the hashtag [#EngagementTogetherWeCan](#).

The school board also debated whether a board Facebook or Twitter may be appropriate. The board said if it does try and make a Facebook page, it would be strictly for news and links to meeting agendas and minutes.

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The next Board of Education meeting will be Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7 p.m. at William J. Johnston Middle School.

# Vegas, Baby, Vegas! for Colchester Hair Stylist

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

No matter what happens in Vegas for Dottie Seitz and her team, it won't just stay in Vegas.

Seitz and a small team from Hair Magic on Norwich Avenue were selected this past spring to compete in the Battle of the Strands (BOTS), the World Cup of Beauty, after winning their qualifying round at the International Beauty School Show held in March at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City.

And now, Seitz and her crew are off to Las Vegas.

"In the end, I can't believe I won," Seitz said of her March victory. She described the qualifying round like being on *Jersey Shore*, with the high competition and cattiness. Seitz ended up winning with her couture Glenda, the Good Witch design from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Hair Magic was the only salon from Connecticut to compete at the qualifying round and Seitz will bring herself, her daughter, Jessica Seitz, and two stylists, Jessica Palmer and Ericka Moody, to Vegas.

BOTS is in its fourth year, according to [battleofthestrands.com](http://battleofthestrands.com). The website describes it as "one of the biggest" competitions of its kind in the world; it began in Las Vegas in 2011, and has since expanded to include more than eight countries. Other qualifier rounds were held in various regions of the United States, as well as Canada, Japan, Brazil and Paris. It's known as "*Project Runway* for Stylists," the website explains, and the 2014 competition is advertised to be "Bigger, Bolder and Louder!"

Going into the competition, Seitz said it's impossible to truly prepare since the challenges themselves are unknown. Last year, competitors had to make a hairstyle that could withstand going 100 m.p.h. in a convertible.

"I am going to take chicken wire, a manikin and hair and hold it out of my car on Route 2," Seitz said. "You know the challenges will be something crazy."

The team leaves Sunday, Sept. 28, and will not return for a week and a half – during which

time she'll have a grueling schedule. The competition will kick off Oct. 1, and each day includes a challenge and multiple master classes from industry experts. The master classes will include hair fashion, texture, photography, nail design, men's hair, and salon management.

"I have done some prep, but most of it will be there," Seitz said. She said she doesn't want to do a ton of prep work because, at the end of the day, show organizers may not let her use it all – preferring her to do her own work there at the competition. In fact, she said, organizers "claim you don't need to bring anything, but then you're less prepared."

Each challenge will include a full look consisting of hair, nails, makeup and outfit. Seitz said she will have to make everything, including her own clothes.

"They said no sewing machines, so you have to staple and tape and make your own," Seitz said. "I may do some body painting."

Seitz said what she does know about the challenges is that she will have to come up with a new trend.

"I've been doing some research online," Seitz said, adding that contestants get voted off and "at the end, there's a chance to win \$100,000."

This year, the competition will be aired as a television series for four to five weeks on the Discovery Fit and Health Channel beginning Dec. 2. Before that, though, the competition will be shown in select movie theaters live on Oct. 6. One of those selected theaters includes the Buckland 18 IMAX in Manchester.

"It's so weird because I remember going to hair shows with extreme stuff when I was a kid then they stopped," Seitz said. "I was one of those kids taking pictures of the models. Here I am that I won at one of those shows and they're taking pictures of my models."

Even if she doesn't win, Seitz said she hopes the competition brings some recognition to Colchester and Connecticut, because people, she feels, "don't think we have style." After competing, Seitz hopes to break into the plat-



**Dorothy "Dottie" Seitz, far left, owner of Hair Magic in Colchester, won the regional Battle of the Strands competition in New York City this past spring, qualifying her for the international Las Vegas competition, which starts next week. Seitz is shown being congratulated after winning by Hair Magic stylist and daughter Jessica Seitz, while Amanda Koss, who was the model Seitz worked on at the show, looks on.**

form artist world, specifically for Schwarzkopf, a hair color company she is already an educator for. As a platform artist, Seitz said, she would learn new techniques at the company's headquarters in Germany, and then teach other hair dressers.

From now until the competition, however, Seitz said she's stressed, although excited, for the opportunity BOTS brings for her and her salon.

"I haven't slept in days," Seitz said. "I've been dreaming of styles."

Hair Magic in Colchester runs the full gamut when it comes to salon services. The salon of-

fers services in nails, hair, coloring and hair replacements. Seitz said she specializes in corrective coloring and extensions. She has been in the business for 34 years, opening her first salon at the age of 18 in East Hartford and then another in Manchester.

Hair Magic Salon has been open in Colchester for 18 years, and a "Hair Magic Academy" has operated within the salon for the last 12. Seitz received her cosmetology license in 1979 from New London Academy for Cosmetology, which has since closed.

For more information about the competition, visit [battleofthestrands.com](http://battleofthestrands.com).

# Andover Woman Honored as Glastonbury Teacher of Year

by Chris Seymour

Andover resident Sandy Nichols was recently named the 2014-15 Glastonbury Teacher of the Year, and when the Glastonbury schools superintendent called her to inform her of the news, the longtime middle school science teacher said she felt like she had "won the lottery."



**Sandy Nichols**

"I am just so honored," said Nichols recently, as she began to choke up a little, joking that she was a "crier."

"It just validates everything you know you do well and I love what I do," added Nichols, who has taught in Glastonbury schools for her entire 25-year teaching career.

What Nichols does is teach eighth grade science – and she does it very well. In fact, Nichols is such an impressive educator that Glastonbury may not be the extent of her honors. On Sept. 5, she was informed that she has been named one of 14 finalists in the Connecticut Teacher of the Year competition, which is sponsored by the state Department of Education's Talent Office.

"It is just an incredible roller coaster ride I am going on," said an elated Nichols of being named a finalist. "All of my passions and efforts – more and more people are seeing it and feeling it" as a result of her being named Glastonbury's Teacher of the Year and advancing in the state competition.

"Sandy Nichols is an outstanding teacher and

a role model for teachers throughout the state and nation," said Glastonbury Superintendent of Schools Alan Bookman. "She is most deserving of her status as a finalist."

Nichols was selected to be Glastonbury's Teacher of the Year by a committee of former Glastonbury teachers of the year, which evaluated the applications of nominees. Teachers in the school system nominate teachers for the award and Nichols' fellow teachers on the grade 8 "Team Titan" at SMS nominated her for the honor.

Nichols called herself "a lifelong learner," adding, "I love to learn and when I do learn it's contagious – I want to share and I am not afraid to learn with the kids."

In fact, in order to "keep up with the kids," Nichols – who has a bachelor's degree in education from Central Connecticut State University – went back to school and earned her master's in educational technology from CCSU (she has a master's in mathematics education as well, and that too came from CCSU).

At a Glastonbury Board of Education meeting earlier this month, board chairwoman Susan Karp said Nichols "has taken a real lead in integrating technology into her classroom," using it "to benefit herself as a teacher but certainly to benefit her students in every way possible." Karp also praised Nichols for her "collaborative approach that she has to absolutely everything."

Nichols began her career teaching math in Glastonbury in 1990, switching to science two years later. In 2000, Glastonbury opened Smith Middle School; Nichols took her talents to the new school, and has remained there ever since.

"I just love the spontaneity of a middle school

kid," Nichols observed. "They want to be cool but how do you be cool? And what is cool today is not cool tomorrow."

"And I like their curiosity too," she added. "They still have that inquisitiveness and they are eager to learn. They don't want you to think they are eager to learn but they really are deep down, especially with science—with all the labs that we have to do, how do you not love science? You are very hands on; most of us, that is what we remember the best."

Nichols also likes the fact that no two days – or lessons – are the same. "Every day is different and every class is different," she said. "I might have the same lesson for five different classes but they're never the same and I think that's what I love."

She also enjoys seeing her students outside of the classroom setting, since it gives her an opportunity to see a different dimension of the kids.

"You only get a little snapshot of them [in school], so I might go to their games or see them before school, [in] clubs and activities, and it's a different setting," explained Nichols. "I believe the school is that little community, that little family."

Outside of school, Nichols has a "little family" of her own. She and her husband Thomas, to whom she has been married for 20 years, have three kids: daughters Kylie, a 2013 RHAM High School graduate, and Tamer, a 2014 RHAM grad and current freshman at Central Connecticut State University, and a son, Jake, a fifth-grader at Andover Elementary School.

Nichols called herself "truly an example of Glastonbury Public Schools."

Raised in Berlin, Nichols said, "While I did

not attend school here, [Glastonbury] took a chance on me and hired me right out of college. The support that they have given me, actually all of Glastonbury teachers and staff throughout the years, is incredible."

Glastonbury schools offers its teachers "a variety of opportunities to be lifelong learners, from in-services, to workshops to professional development opportunities" in order to "develop their craft," detailed Nichols.

She furthered, "The administration is very supportive of new initiatives and keeps us current with trends in education." She said she feels she was chosen for her Teacher of the Year honor "not only for my contributions to the educational field, but for what I have accomplished through their continued guidance and support."

One of those supportive administrators – SMS principal Donna Schilke – observed in a Glastonbury schools press release that, "wherever Sandy is, that is where all want to be. She shares her good works and passion for her students, bringing us together in the spirit that makes us family."

Up next for Nichols is the state competition, which has typically named a winner in past years in October. Nichols will be interviewed by a panel, and from there, she said the finalists will be narrowed down and site visits will be conducted before the Nutmeg State's Teacher of the Year is crowned.

Nichols is hoping to become the third Glastonbury teacher to be crowned State Teacher of the Year since the contest's inception in 1952; the two previous winners from town include Deborah Gladding Willard in 1986 and Marianne Cavanaugh in 1998.

# Phase III of Marlborough Sewer Project Sent to Public Hearing

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Phase III of the town's sewer project moved forward Monday after the Board of Finance voted on and approved the project to go to public hearing.

The \$3.5 million project will now complete the hookups along the watershed of Lake Terramuggus including North Main Street from the intersection of Pettingill Road to Lake Road, as well as Lake Road, Culman Lane, Pettingill Road, Walker Lane, Lafayette Road and Roberts Road to the southern intersection with Sherwood Lane. Phase III adds 98 properties to the system and 105.25 equivalent dwelling units (EDUs).

Out of the \$3.5 million, 25 percent will be paid for by the state. The remaining 75 percent is paid for by the town through a long-term borrowing loan with a 2 percent interest rate for 20 years. The loan totals \$3,218,936.

Out of the town's portion, 40 percent will be paid for by users in the system. Each homeowner would be responsible for \$12,060 which is a \$603 payment yearly for 20 years. The homeowner is also responsible for operating and maintenance. This year's fee would be \$432, for example.

The remaining 60 percent is paid for through general taxes.

However one of the issues that came up during the meeting was the debt that the town will endure with the project. First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski provided the board with the Existing Marlborough Debt Summary by Fiscal Year including Phase II and III of the sewer project. For Phase III, the debt payments would begin in 2017 in the amount of \$161,723.46. The town would incur \$100,000 of the debt and the rest would come from the users of the system.

Gaudinski stated the debt from Phase II did not cost the town additional debt due to the Marlborough Health Care Center. However with more users on the system, Gaudinski said there would be more stability for the budget. She also said if this phase of the project is not passed, then it would take several years for the town to get funds from the state again.

Board of Finance Chairwoman Evelyn Godbout was concerned about the additional debt which would force \$61,723.46 onto the users of the system. Godbout stated Marlborough already has a higher debt than most Connecticut towns.

The board plans to provide residents with information about the debt at the public hearing.

However, some residents involved with Phase II are not happy with the project. In a

letter dated July 22 from Planning and Development Director Peter Hughes to residents in the Phase II project, it states that the town will pursue legal action against those who did not immediately authorize the construction of the grinder pump on their property.

Hughes stated in the letter that "The MWPCA (Marlborough Water Pollution Control Authority) has already won two court cases on appealing the mandatory connection and does not wish to pursue legal action again, but, will be forced to if you fail to authorize construction.

"Whether you connect or not your property will have a benefit assessment lien of \$12,060 payable over 20 years since the sewer line fronts your property, and a notice of violation filed on the Marlborough Land Records that will impact your ability to obtain financing and sale of the property in the future," Hughes went on to say.

Bob Cindric, a resident in the Phase II territory, stated that no one in town wants the property lien and that he finally had to give in to the installation of the grinder pump, however he has not connected. Cindric said part of the reason he did not want to install was a mature tree

on his property that sat in the way of the pump's construction.

"The town will not acknowledge any potential responsibility toward the risk to my mature trees," Cindric said. "This risk is real as we have consulted an arborist and my wife is a certified master gardener. Peter Hughes' final comment to my wife was that we would be hearing from the MWPCA."

The letter also said that if the homeowner did not authorize the construction for the pump, the homeowner would have to finance it themselves which would be approximately \$20,000 to \$35,000 which would have been \$12,060 as part of the project.

Hughes could not be reached by press time Thursday.

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom said he was in favor of the project, but abstained from the vote because he is a property owner that could benefit from the sewer. Hjulstrom is a real estate agent.

The board approved for the project to go to public hearing on Thursday, Oct. 2. The next step would be a finance board vote that night, a town meeting on Oct. 21 and then a referendum on Election Day, Nov. 4.

## Marlborough Resident Co-Produces Documentary on Jim Calhoun

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

It wasn't until she was interviewing Pat Calhoun, Jim Calhoun's wife, that Marlborough resident Lauren Cragg realized her documentary on the longtime UConn Huskies coach could be more than just a basketball movie.

"The film is bigger than for a rabid men's basketball fan," Cragg said. "It made me really want to be part of it. As much as *The Blind Side* is about football, this is about leadership and underdog determination, not just about basketball."

The project began filming in April 2013 after Cragg teamed up with Chris Martens, formerly with ESPN. Cragg met Martens five years ago while he was working for ESPN and she was trying to pitch potential stories and shows.

Under the name L.C. Cragg, Cragg and Martens chose Calhoun for his spirit and also his reluctance to media.

"As a filmmaker, I believe in three things," Cragg said. "It should take you somewhere you can't go on your own, the film should affect you in some way emotionally, and after you've seen the film, you should have a different perspective on life."

Cragg's first obstacle with the film was acquiring funding. She said she learned a lot about resources outside of Kickstarter to get the money needed for the project.

"I told people, for us to give up on a film about a man who teaches kids not to give up would make us a hypocrite," Cragg said. "I got a fiscal sponsorship from [nywift.org](http://nywift.org) and leased a 501(c)(3)."

According to the film's website, *Born to Lead: Jim Calhoun* provides a unique inside look into the coach's life. During his 40-year career, he won 873 games and three National Championships. Calhoun could be profane, combative and polarizing, but also charitable and compassionate.

Calhoun lost his father at 15, and the documentary goes into how his being the man of the house taught him to work hard and sacrifice, the website explains. Calhoun's tough love wasn't the style for everyone, but those that went through it reaped the benefits.

The documentary includes over 30 interviews, including Pat Calhoun, coaches Mike Krzyzewski and Jim Boeheim, current head coach Kevin Ollie, former players and NBA stars Ray Allen and Richard Hamilton, *Hartford Courant* writers Jeff Jacobs and Don Amore, and Patty Thompson, sister of the UConn team manager Joe McGinn who passed away in 1999.

The film ends, Cragg said, with the Huskies winning the national championship in 2014; while Calhoun was no longer coaching the team by that point, it still included many players he had recruited.

As a first-time documentary producer, Cragg said she's enjoyed the journey.

"Our access to never-before-seen Calhoun photos and footage has been inspiring, emotional and energizing," Cragg said. "To think that perhaps all this information about his journey, underdog determination, relationships with

press, players, rivals and tough love leadership may have been never shared without this film.

"No doubt, he's a complex character," Cragg continued, "but I believe Chris and I have done a fair and comprehensive job. [I] Can't wait to share it, with one and all."

Cragg herself grew up in the Midwest and said she was never really a rabid basketball fan, however in this case, that was probably a good thing.

"With a documentary, I couldn't be [a huge fan] in this situation, I'd be too biased," Cragg said.

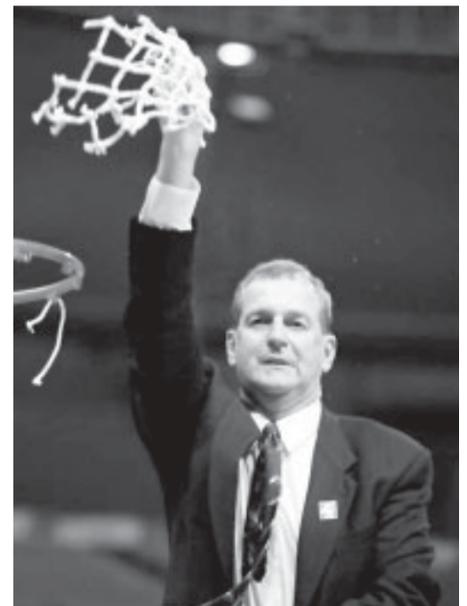
Between getting the film ready to premiere and her work with the New York Women in Film and Television organization, Cragg resigned from her position as an alternate on the Marlborough Board of Finance earlier this year.

"It was either the Board of Finance or the documentary," Cragg said. "There were just a lot of conflicts."

Future plans for Cragg and Martens may be a second documentary on a leader in sports, but that has not been confirmed yet. For Cragg, she may also pursue her own feature films that she wrote.

The premiere of *Born to Lead: Jim Calhoun* will be Thursday, Oct. 2, at the Bushnell in Hartford. Tickets are \$30. There is also an option to attend a VIP reception afterwards at the Mark Twain House. The film's running time is 56 minutes.

For more information on the film, visit [borntoleaddoc.com](http://borntoleaddoc.com).



On Oct. 2, a documentary about Jim Calhoun by Marlborough resident Lauren Cragg and former-ESPN employee Chris Martens will premier at the Bushnell.

## Marlborough Selectmen Drop FOIC Appeal

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously at a special meeting Tuesday morning to drop the appeal against a decision made by the Freedom of Information Commission in June.

The FOIC decision regarded a complaint made by former alternate on the Board of Finance Lauren Cragg in July 2013 claiming First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski failed to provide her with copies of a legal opinion.

The situation began in May 2013, when, at a town meeting on whether to adopt the 2013-14 fiscal year budget, former Board of Finance member Beth Petroni presented an alternative budget at a town meeting. The alternate budget passed with voters – but town officials questioned whether the changes to the budget were legal or even correct.

Three days later, at a May 16 meeting, Gaudinski informed the Board of Finance that the budget vote had been flawed. A new bud-

get was then delivered to voters and passed. At that meeting, Gaudinski read aloud portions of a legal opinion from the town attorney and bond counsel, stating the vote had been flawed. Cragg requested in writing copies of documents including that opinion; when she failed to receive them, she filed the complaint with the FOIC.

In June, the commission found Gaudinski at fault.

The FOIC's original decision stated Gaudinski "waived the attorney-client privilege" in regards to disclosing a legal opinion when she read aloud portions of the opinion to the Board of Finance.

The commission had told Gaudinski to release the legal opinion, but hadn't because of the filing of the appeal.

In July, Cragg had told the *Rivereast* that she "couldn't imagine that the attorney's letter is so detrimental to the town that First Selectman

Gaudinski felt she needed to spend \$20,000 to prevent it from becoming public."

After Tuesday's decision to drop the appeal, Gaudinski released the copy of the legal opinion in this week's *Rivereast* and stated residents can contact her office for a copy of the official letter with the letterhead and official signature.

In her "From the First Selectwoman's Desk" in this week's paper, Gaudinski stated that "the Board of Selectmen has reached the decision that the best course of action is to voluntarily and publicly disclose the opinion letter. The town will withdraw its appeal, and in the future, when we seek and obtain confidential legal advice, we will either (a) keep its existence and content confidential or (b) make the advice public, depending on the nature of the issue."

Gaudinski added that "we continue to believe that the commission's decision was erro-

neous, but the issue can best be addressed in this manner."

However, Cragg said this week she will not be satisfied until the actual letter is in her possession. She said she was also unaware the board would be dropping the appeal. Cragg and Gaudinski had a court date last Wednesday, Sept. 17, and at the time, Cragg said she thought the appeal was going forward, not being dropped. If the case had gone forward, it would be going to trial.

"This is finally a step in the right direction," Cragg said, but added, "After all this time, and all this money, we still don't have the actual letter. I guess I'll wait to get it from the court."

Cragg said that, so far, she has been unable to get the letter from Gaudinski's office and no one has returned her calls.

Gaudinski would not return calls for comment further on the issue.

# \$40,000 Business Manager Raise Sparks Complaints in Portland

by John Tyczkowski

Nearly 50 town residents turned out to a special joint meeting between the boards of selectmen and education Tuesday night, called to discuss irregularities surrounding the hiring and pay of the schools' business manager.

The Board of Selectmen requested the meeting.

Portland had previously had a business assistant and the superintendent of schools cooperatively manage finance matters for Portland Public Schools.

However, Board of Education member Chris Phelps, who was chairman at the time the business manager position was created, said the school board made the new position in order to shift business responsibilities off of the superintendent.

"We were concerned that those duties were taking away from the superintendent's educational leadership role," Phelps said.

The board discontinued the position of business assistant and then created the position of business manager with a starting salary of \$60,000 annually, but then gave the manager a \$40,000 raise spread out over two \$20,000 raises over two years.

However, Board of Education member Ben Srb said he had not been aware of the \$100,000 end pay rate, though he had been aware of the first \$20,000 increase, which brought the business manager's pay up to \$80,000.

"I was never aware it was going to go up from \$60,000 to \$100,000," Srb said. "I never knew there was a second portion."

Regarding the salary amount, Phelps said that they "had done [their] homework" and the board had looked at business manager salaries from

Cromwell and other towns in the same district reference group, and that \$100,000 was in line.

"East Hampton pays theirs \$105,000, and Cromwell pays theirs \$107,000," he said.

At the same time, Phelps said the business assistant was the only one considered for the position, and that the job was not posted publicly, and that the two raises were a carefully considered measure.

"Doing that gave us the opportunity to phase in the financial impact over time," he said.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield read from two letters to the town from concerned union members, from both the Municipal Employees Union Independent and the Portland Police Union.

The letters focused on how union members resented the fact that while they had taken "below-market settlements" in their contract negotiations in order to ease the financial strain on the town, one employee received a \$40,000 raise.

"We were very displeased that a Town of Portland employee received such a large adjustment," Bransfield read from the MEUI letter.

Selectman Ryan Curley questioned the Board of Education about their explanation of their action, wondering where the funds for the \$40,000 raise came from.

He also criticized Phelps' justification of the business manager's salary by comparing Portland's \$19 million education budget to Cromwell's \$27 million education budget.

"I don't think it's fair to compare us; we're not the same town," he said.

Curley also said that since the town charter specifies the town director of finance handle

Board of Education finances, he saw the business manager position as "redundant."

"I don't see the need for this position," he said. "What kind of message does this send to the town, that we really don't care about our other employees?"

"You really dropped the ball on this," Curley said to the board.

When he had finished speaking, Curley received a long round of applause from the residents in attendance.

Phelps said in reply that the board "dropped the ball" when they did not make the second \$20,000 raise more explicit during the 2014-15 budget review, though they did include the first \$20,000 raise in the 2013-2014 budget.

"That was a clear error on our part," he said.

However, Bransfield said this hearing demonstrated perfectly the need for transparency in town government, which "is governed by rules, labor laws and the provisions of the town charter."

"In much of this matter, my concern is the procedures that were, or were not, followed," she said. "This is a serious matter, and I think it's very healthy that we're talking about this now."

At the same time, she stressed the seriousness of what had happened, and mentioned that there should be "equality and equity" in matters of employee pay.

"I was told totally out of the blue. I was shocked, frankly, that such an amount of money was going to a single employee," Bransfield said. "We must have transparency."

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The public comment section of the meeting

was no less contentious, as some of those who spoke were town employees in addition to being taxpayers.

Resident Janet Ellsworth said she felt betrayed by what the Board of Education had decided to do.

"This is a misuse of our taxes. It takes away from our children," she said.

Ellsworth emphasized that the \$40,000 will add up over time, and in a decade, \$400,000 will have "been taken from the students" for what she called an "ill-conceived and unnecessary post."

"The choice the Board of Education made will have long-term ramifications," she said.

Resident Lynn Gildersleeve said she was "extremely disappointed" with the Board of Education members involved in what she called "a poor decision."

"I voted in good faith that my tax dollars would be used wisely," she said. "Come election time, my vote will be recorded loud and clear for seating new members of the Board of Education."

Bernadette Dillon, town clerk for 37 years, went through step-by-step, detailing the job posting and hiring process.

She said that all job descriptions must be posted in the town clerk's office and must first be offered to town staff, and then if none of them apply or are qualified, the position is opened up to the public at large.

"I am very disappointed," Dillon said. "I can't believe that our Board of Education, that we voted for and supported, could do this to us, the taxpayers of the town of Portland."

## East Hampton Board Honors Retired Bus Company Owner

by John Tyczkowski

The Board of Education recognized Charlie Nichols of Nichols Bus Company with a Friend of Education award at Monday night's meeting.

Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas said when presenting the award to Nichols that his family-owned business "exemplifies a characteristic of East Hampton's great small-town community."

"Charlie's company has serviced more than 100,000 students and multiple generations over an incredible 70-year time span," she continued. "As a matter of fact, Charlie still remains a licensed school bus driver today."

Dugas also said Nichols has "dedicated his life to positively contributing to the school system and entire community."

She stated, "Charlie knows that a student's day starts when a child gets on the bus, and because of that he's given his all and his passion to his business and it's become much more than that; he's been a true friend of the education community."

Nichols received a certificate from the board, as well as a standing ovation from everyone in attendance.

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Also at Monday's meeting, the board recognized Andrew Morse, a high school junior who was selected as a semi-finalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Morse qualified based on PSAT scores and standardized National Merit Scholarship Program tests, and is one of 16,000 semi-finalists selected from a total pool of 50,000 students nationwide. He is now eligible to advance to the finalist level of 7,600 students who will be chosen as 2015 winners, Dugas explained.

"The 2013 PSATs served as the initial screening for 1.4 million entrants. This is not a small feat by any means," Dugas said. "Semi-finalists are the highest scorers in each of the 50 states, so Andrew represents the best of the best and we are certainly proud that he's from East Hampton."

"It speaks volumes to your family's commitment to education, to your commitment to education and what it will mean for your future," she said.

Morse's next step is to submit a National Merit application. He will be notified of his final status in February 2015.

According to the program's website,

[nationalmerit.org](http://nationalmerit.org), National Merit scholars can receive one of three scholarships: a \$2,500 single payment scholarship, a four-year renewable scholarship from a corporate sponsor or a four-year renewable scholarship from a college or university.

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The superintendent's report from Monday included an update on the parking situation at the high school in the face of the imminent renovations.

Previously, Dugas had mentioned the town was planning to work with the VFW to secure additional parking for students during the school day and for activities outside of the school day. Most of the spaces students normally use will be reserved for construction personnel, as well as teachers and staff.

"Our goal is by October 1 to be able to communicate to high [school] students and families about this," Dugas said. "We're not sure whether working with the VFW will pan out the way we had wanted to. However, Downs Construction [the company managing the renovations] is working with us to look at two alternative possibilities that they've put into their planning."

One of these options included putting in spaces near the Hills Avenue entrance to the high school.

"Even though there's wetlands, we think we could put in about 15 spaces, give or take," she said.

The other option involved putting parking on the green space across from the VFW to the left of the monument there.

"That was going to be staging for the trailers, but they've found an alternate location, so we can look at some temporary parking there," Dugas said.

She also said that she had held meetings with East Hampton's emergency responders to solidify a plan for allowing emergency vehicles to get to and from the high school easily during the renovations.

"We do want to have a community meeting probably during the first week of October, or the beginning of the second week at the absolute latest," Dugas said. "We want communication to be open and have community members come forward with any concerns they may have."

"It's not just the parking during the day, it's the parking for community events in the evening



Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas (right) shakes hands with East Hampton resident Charlie Nichols, who was recognized Monday for his 70 years of service to the town through his business, Nichols Bus Company.

that's going to create ongoing issues," she said. "We have to take things season by season, and event by event, and try to be proactive."

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Also at Monday's meeting, the board unanimously approved a \$90,000 safety and security grant that would be 52 percent reimbursable and would complement town money already marked for the same purpose.

"We're in the process of implementing the grant, and it includes things like buzzers and extra security cameras we installed last year. This is the second round to it," Dugas said.

Dugas also said the grant money was primarily being funneled to town elementary and middle schools, because the high school was already receiving security and safety upgrades as part of its renovation.

Another major use for the grant money was providing upgrades to each school's police radio network and emergency training for teachers and staff.

Responding to a question from board member Scott Minnick about the purpose and use of each school's radio network, Dugas said such networks are more useful in emergencies than normal phone lines.

"It is a radio system that, in the event of a

significant tragedy, you would be able to have direct contact with the police department," Dugas said. "We don't have a dispatch in East Hampton, we have to go outside, so it's a direct line to them."

Board Chair Ken Barber added, "Cell phones, Internet phones and landlines would probably be overwhelmed. We don't have the capacity in town."

Responding to questions from the board about the \$9,000 price tag of each network, Barber said that it was "woefully undervalued."

"The cost would be much higher than that if we wanted to get a full interoperability system; it's more like \$80,000" he said. "What we're trying to do is get a start toward a system that aligns with other districts that are upgrading. This is a just a quick bite of that."

Dugas also said receiving and using the money from this grant "is a two year process," and would be added to the end of the town's current two-year safety and security grant.

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The next East Hampton Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14 at 7 p.m. in the East Hampton High School library.

# ‘A Songwriter First and Foremost’

by John Tyczkowski

Though he’s written enough songs to fill a 15-track album, and enough to release a second full album next April, Bill Naughton Jr. doesn’t consider himself a recording artist.

“I am a songwriter first and foremost,” he said.

Naughton, who lives in Cobalt, recently released his debut album, *Songwriter, Volume 1*. He said he recorded it primarily to have quality recordings to pitch to other artists.

“I don’t consider myself the recording artist who’s going to make these songs famous in any way, except for maybe my living room,” he said.

He said personally he’d love to see the Dixie Chicks perform one of his songs, “Take Your Eyes Off My Mama Mister!” which he considers “a real crowd pleaser.”

“That’s the type of song where, if the song is well-known at the time of the performance, they could get the crowd to chant the title back to them,” he said. “My motto is ‘Think big, and whittle it down to reality.’ I would be very lucky if the Dixie Chicks did my song, but it would be really good if somebody did.”

He also said he’s begun talking with a producer in Dallas to that end.

Naughton said that he took a country perspective when writing the album’s songs.

“That’s where, in my opinion, the real songs are these days,” he said. “Also, it’s because I’ve always been into country music. I worked at country radio stations in Nashville as a disc jockey.”

In particular, Naughton said, the track “Your Smile” was written with Willie Nelson in mind, and features “a perfect Willie Nelson guitar solo.”

Naughton also said that he plans to head back to his musical roots.

“I was writing songs when I worked down there and I met a lot of people in the music industry there, and I’m planning on going back and passing CDs around,” he said.

He also cited Bob McDill, who wrote “a song a week for 30 years” before he retired, as his single largest songwriting influence.

“He’s my idol, my songwriting mentor, even though I never met him,” Naughton said. “He wrote these two-and-a-half, three-minute songs and had dozens of number one hits with other people, Don Williams in particular.”

“He’s a great individual for me to model my songwriting after,” he said.

Naughton said that he also considers himself a lyricist primarily. He said that he got his start writing poetry in high school, but that he first started thinking about them as songs in college.

“I met a friend from Portland, Lou Gerolami,

who put music to my poetry, and just blew me away,” he said. “I started to think song lyrics from then on. I’d give him a lot of lyrics and he would write melodies for them.”

“I learned a lot from him and then went to Nashville, and started writing complete songs,” Naughton said.

Naughton also said that in particular, he has “a lot of hope” for the song “In the Morning We’ll Split Up,” especially with a female vocal track.

“I write specifically for a female vocal, and there will actually be seven female vocal tracks on the next album,” he said. “The way the songs are worded, they wouldn’t sound right with me. I almost waited with this one, but it was so close to being either/or, I didn’t want to hold onto it, because it’s such a strong song.”

Naughton recorded the album over a period of 10 months at The Coffeehouse Recording Studio in Middletown with owner, engineer and producer Michael Arafah.

“He really brought out the best in me,” Naughton said.

He said that the impetus for the album began with him coming up with the song “Meet the Beatles,” and then wanting to realize it in time for the 50th anniversary of that band’s arrival in the United States: Jan. 20, 2014.

“It took time, and I wrote it, and I thought it had a catchy chorus, but I thought it was just one of those personal things that you do,” he said. “And then one day I played it with my ukulele for my kids. They said ‘Hey daddy, play it again!’”

“So I said to myself, if these little kids can remember it after hearing it once, maybe there’s more here than I thought,” Naughton said. “So I worked on the song even more, and wrote a bridge, and it completed the song.”

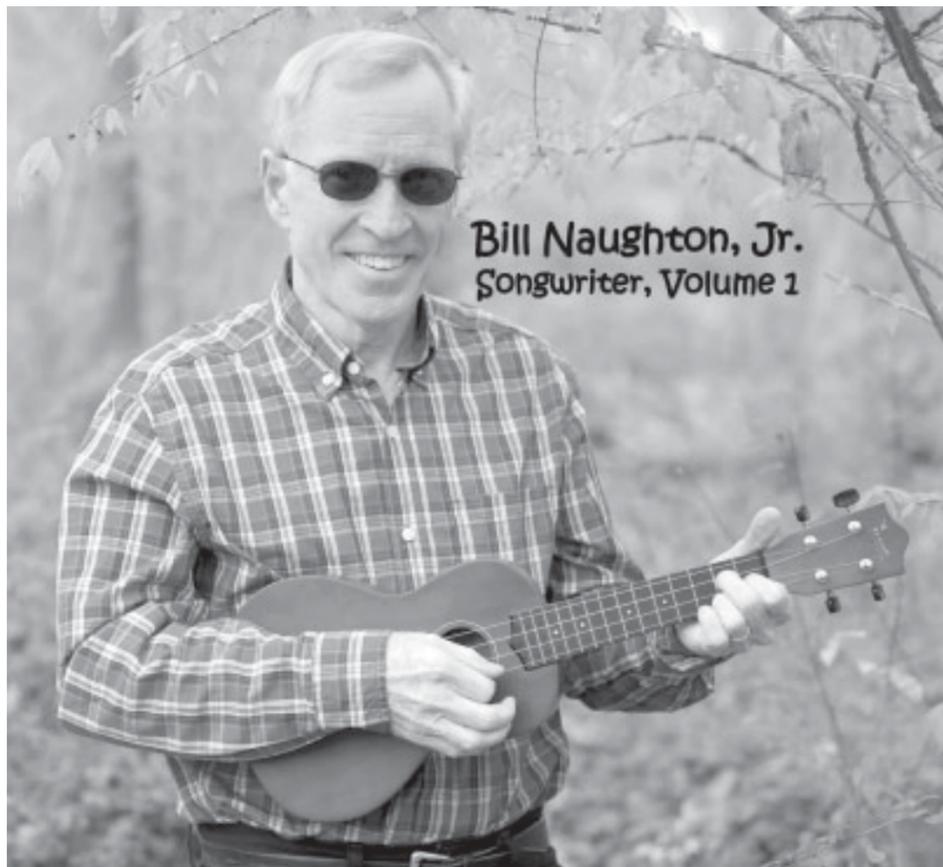
Naughton said he was able to release the single on Jan. 20, as planned.

However, he said that recording the full album took much longer than he had first pictured, due to the mechanics of the recording process and the fact that he only had time to record once a week.

Naughton said he had gone into the Middletown recording studio last November, “and I thought I was going to have ‘Meet the Beatles’ ready for January, and then just knock off another 14 songs and have an album ready by February or March. Well, it took at least six months longer than that.”

At the same time, he said he was glad that “things just came together” to allow him to realize his songs and record an album.

Through “good timing and coincidences,” Naughton was able to work with members of the Connecticut tribute band Beatles Forever.



Resident Bill Naughton Jr. recently released his first album – which he recorded in the hopes of pitching his songs to other artists. Album cover photography by Olga Gerik.

Terry Miggins, the band’s guitarist, played lead guitar on *Songwriter, Volume 1*, and Jay Miggins, the band’s drummer, played drums and percussion on the album.

Jerry Clapis, the group’s bass player, also contributed bass playing to “Meet the Beatles.” Naughton said that it made the album “a real Connecticut-based project,” since Terry is from Broad Brook, Jay is from Milford and Jerry is from Hartford.

“I’d love to have them come back for the second album,” he said.

In addition to the band members, Naughton also said his daughter Vanessa, a seventh-grader at East Hampton Middle School, contributed flute solos on two of the album’s tracks, “We Were Only Children” and “How’d You Find Me Here?”

“I’m very proud of her, she played wonderfully,” Naughton said.

Though he said his goal is still to pitch his songs to other recording artists, Naughton said

that he’s looking forward to performing this Saturday.

“I hope it’s the start of more library concerts and maybe some summer gazebo-type concerts too,” he said.

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“Meet the Beatles” with Bill Naughton Jr. is the first act in the town’s 2014-15 Saturday Afternoon Concert series. Naughton will be performing *Songwriter, Volume 1* in its entirety.

The concert will take place Saturday, Sept. 27, at 2 p.m. at East Hampton Public Library. Concertgoers must call 860-267 6621 to register, and the concert is free.

Also, “Songwriter, Volume 1” is available for digital download from iTunes, Amazon and through other digital formats as well as by mail order. Prospective listeners can visit Naughton’s website, [bilibolgamusic.com](http://bilibolgamusic.com) and his Facebook page, [facebook.com/pages/Bilibolga-Music/286331681443991](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bilibolga-Music/286331681443991).

# Case of the Missing Campaign Signs in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

As the campaign season heads toward its apex, state representative candidate signs are disappearing around the 34th Assembly District, which covers East Hampton, East Haddam and the Westchester portion of Colchester.

Mimi Perrotti, the Democratic candidate challenging Republican incumbent Melissa Ziobron for the state representative seat, said several of her campaign signs have gone missing, and it’s creating a finance problem.

“Our signs are gone, and there’s no more money to buy new signs. It puts a dent in my campaign,” she said. “I will either have to take signs from other locations, or I will have to spend money from another part of my budget.”

Perrotti owns a sign-making business, but said she is prohibited by state campaign finance laws from making her own signs.

“All of our money is pre-allocated,” she said. “You make a budget and keep your fingers crossed that you won’t run into any problems.”

Perrotti’s treasurer, Terry Concannon, who was herself a state representative from 1993-98, said that although signs had been disappearing piecemeal over the past few weeks, a “significant” number of campaign signs, including a medium-sized one bigger than a normal lawn

sign, went missing overnight from Monday into Tuesday.

She and Perrotti said two signs on North Main Street had disappeared, as well as a larger sign at the corner of North Maple and Route 66, and “a few” on Route 66, all in East Hampton.

“To have all of these signs taken at once, overnight, in so many locations...it looks like it’s a concerted effort,” Concannon said. “And the ironic thing is that we got permission to place signs everywhere we placed them.”

In addition, Concannon said the signs missing in East Hampton were only Perrotti’s, and that none of her opponent’s signs had been removed at any of the locations.

Also, Perrotti said several signs went missing from people’s lawns in East Haddam over the weekend.

“I’m trying to run a clean campaign here, and it’s very silly and very elementary to do this kind of thing,” she said. “I look for my signs every day, and there were all there [Monday].”

She also said she filed a complaint with East Hampton police on Tuesday.

“If the police find someone with the signs, they’re going to press charges,” Perrotti said.

“This is stealing.”

Ziobron said that stolen signs are a “normal but unfortunate” part of campaigning every year.

“Our campaign has been dealing with missing signs this year as well,” she said. “We have 10 missing right now.”

Ziobron said some lawn signs had disappeared from houses around the Lake Hayward area of East Haddam, as well as from a house on Clark Hill in the same town and from the front of Spencer Funeral Home on Main Street in East Hampton.

She related one particular incident during a campaign several years ago where many of her campaign’s lawn signs were stolen off of peoples’ lawns in East Haddam, because of a high school students’ scavenger hunt.

“You had to laugh about it afterwards, but you also have to be frugal with your campaign budgets,” Ziobron said. “Those signs are expensive, and it’s a shame.”

She also said she wanted people to know that the signs for her and Perrotti are all taxpayer-funded, by means of the Citizens’ Election Program.

“When those signs are stolen, on either side,

it’s very harmful to the process overall,” Ziobron said. “We’re forced to use more taxpayer money, and there are more useful things I’d prefer to be spending it on.”

David Balthazar, Ziobron’s campaign manager, said that the Ziobron campaign also obtains permission each year to place signs.

“We verify each and every location for permission,” he said. “We don’t just assume because we did last year, we could do it again this year.”

He also said that any missing signs were almost always sporadic without any discernable pattern to them, and that the Ziobron campaign has “more important matters to focus on.”

“Our campaign is based upon voter contact, we go door-to-door and talk to people. That’s where the votes are,” Balthazar said. “We’re not obsessing over 10 missing signs.”

Ziobron said she’s learned to deal with missing signs through experience. Though she’s only been in state office since 2012, she’s been involved in local politics since 2005.

“If this had happened 10 years ago to me, I would have been the first to get mad,” she said. “But now I see that it’s simply an unfortunate part of the campaign process and a nuisance.”

# Board, New Company Discuss Bus Transition in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

Buses were the topic of the evening at Monday's Board of Education meeting.

Three representatives from DATTCO were in attendance to make a presentation about the company: Phil Johnson, the company's school bus division vice president; Shirley Gralnick, director of operations; and Frank Baio, senior safety director.

The presentation included DATTCO's track record in areas such as driver safety, training and bus maintenance, and provided the opportunity for board members to have their questions about the transition from Nichols Bus Service to DATTCO answered.

The presentation focused mostly on giving an overview of DATTCO and not on its operations in East Hampton. Johnson shared DATTCO transports 110,000 Connecticut students daily on 1,200 routes, has a contract retention rate of over 98 percent, and has never defaulted on a contract.

But relating to East Hampton specifically, he added the company is implementing a computerized route-tracking system that can be coordinated locally to ensure smooth bus runs.

Baio then talked bus safety, and discussed the screening process and drug testing drivers go through, which Baio said is stricter than the federal and state mandated processes. He also shared the plans DATTCO makes with school districts for student evacuations were a Sandy Hook-type event to occur.

"Nothing is more critical to us than getting a child safely to school," Johnson said.

After the presentation, Johnson was in the hot seat as a hail of questions flew from Board of Education Chair Ken Barber.

Responding to Barber, Johnson said Nichols had 86 employees when DATTCO acquired it. Out of "25 or 26" Nichols employees that worked in town, counting drivers and support personnel, six employees left during the DATTCO transition, which included two mechanics and four drivers.

Eighteen of those employees were bus drivers, Johnson said. He said the process was that DATTCO representatives talked to employees and interviewed them, rode along with them to assess their skills, gave them some time to think over their employment, and finally made offers

to all of the Nichols employees to continue their work with DATTCO.

Johnson said that the Nichols employees hadn't yet been transitioned over to the DATTCO pay scale, which is higher than Nichols, because the Nichols system was not uniform. He said Nichols rates ranged from \$11 an hour to \$26 an hour.

"It's just been time consuming work, because they have an assortment of individual pay rates," he said. "DATTCO has pay scales; if you've been here for one year, it's \$14 an hour to start. [At] two years it's \$14.65 an hour. Nichols didn't do that."

Additionally, Barber said that he had heard Nichols employees were given personality tests to see if they "were moral and fit enough to drive a bus," which he said they considered "demeaning."

Johnson said DATTCO merely gave those employees the standard entry-level tests for all DATTCO drivers.

"We have a responsibility to make sure they come up to our standards," he said. "It's not demeaning and wasn't meant to be. Everyone

who worked for Nichols was welcomed into DATTCO."

Johnson stressed DATTCO's commitment to providing jobs for Nichols employees.

"We made a deal with Charlie Nichols that anyone who worked for him would get a job," he said.

Johnson also said DATTCO and Nichols had been "friends for a very long time," and that DATTCO had provided Nichols with mechanics and drivers for "several years."

"I've known Charlie for 35 years, and he's a great guy," he said. "There was no way DATTCO was going to let Charlie sink, not on our watch."

When Barber asked what efforts DATTCO was willing to make to hire local drivers, Johnson said they were prepared to make "every effort possible."

"I would prefer to have people out of East Hampton drive for us," Johnson said.

\* \* \*

Nichols sold to DATTCO over the summer; the transition between companies took effect at the start of the school year.

## Two-Alarm Portland House Fire Started in Basement

by John Tyczkowski

Portland firefighters responded to a single-family house fire around 9 a.m. last Friday morning at 373 Penfield Hill Road, around Woodhaven Drive.

Portland Fire Chief Bob Shea, who responded to the scene, said that the owner of the house called the fire in to the department.

"When we arrived, there was heavy smoke coming from the structure, and we found there was heavy fire in the basement," he said. "However, the house was unoccupied at the time, we were told that by the home owner."

Shea said fire crews got to work immediately in the basement.

"We went into a very aggressive suppression of the basement fire, the heat of the fire was tremendous," he said.

Though firefighters were able to contain the fire to the basement and first-floor family room, Shea said there was "extensive damage" all around.

"It did significant damage to the rest of the house through heat and smoke damage," he said. "The damage consumed the majority of the first floor, so afterward we couldn't get into the house to overhaul it like we usually do. It took a little more time."

The house is located about 1,000 feet from

the road, Shea said, so fire personnel had to form a water line and bring in water by running hoses from tankers out in the street.

The water difficulties are what resulted in upgrading the blaze to two alarms, he said.

Shea said that crews responded from Middletown, Glastonbury and East Hampton, providing tanks, engines and additional personnel.

The fire was under control by around 9:30 a.m.

"It was a daytime fire, and we have limited resources during the day, since we're a volunteer fire department," Shea said. "We would have great difficulty without these mutual aid agreements in place, they're always there to help."

He also said that luckily, with the bulk of the fire under control, he was able to release units to assist at a house fire in East Hampton, which also happened that Friday morning.

"They left our scene and went directly there," Shea said. "And their tankers were already filled."

He also said, though the fire's origin "was definitely in the basement," the fire marshal's office is still investigating the cause of the fire.

## RHAM Coach to Participate in Curling Competition

by Geeta Schrayter

The RHAM Board of Education Monday expressed their support for Coach Stephen Emt in his endeavor to become an Olympic athlete.

Emt requested some of his accrued sick days be converted to personal days so he could participate with the USA National Wheelchair Curling Team – and eventually, the USA Paralympics curling team.

This participation, he explained, would involve missing approximately 16 work days in 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17. During the next Olympic year, 2018, he'd miss approximately 25 days.

Emt explained he currently has 130 accrued sick days.

He added wheelchair curling "is very important to me," and said it was important for him to have dreams and goals, and to show his students that with hard work and commitment they could be achieved.

In a letter Emt wrote to the board, he furthered, "I have been participating in the sport of Wheelchair Curling for a little over a year now and I have rapidly increased up the USA rankings."

Emt went on to explain he's trained with the USA National Team over the past year and has had the opportunity to work with the National team coach, Steve Brown.

"The best wheelchair curlers in the country have all said that with commitment, dedication and hard work, I will be next to them in the future representing our country," he wrote.

Emt further explained in his letter being a

member of the USA National Team and the USA Olympic Team had been a goal of his since he first started competing.

"The opportunity to represent my country and compete at the highest level in [the] sport as an amateur is something that I am looking forward to," he wrote.

Emt explained at the meeting he had trips planned to Korea, Scotland and Wisconsin for the National Trials come November.

After the trials, Emt said he'd become a part of the USA Olympic Team, and added he already had sponsors lined up for when that takes place.

In his absence, Emt told the board his assistant coaches would take care of the basketball team, and he had a consistent substitute lined up for his classes. In addition, he said he plans to use the internet to keep in touch with his students.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me to represent my country, travel the world, and hopefully bring back an Olympic medal to the community, the school, and the district," he concluded in his letter. "It is my hope, that I have the support from my school board of education, my superintendent and my colleagues while representing the RHAM community in this venture."

The board's support was expressed Monday when they unanimously approved Emt's request; he took off for his first trip, to Korea, Tuesday morning.

## Multiple Towns Respond to Hebron House Fire

by Geeta Schrayter

Several towns responded to a house fire in Hebron Saturday that left the home inhabitable.

According to Hebron Fire Chief Nick Wallick, the Hebron Fire Department responded to a call to 324 Jagger Ln. around 3:20 p.m. Sept. 20.

"We were called to respond to a house fire on Jagger Lane and upon arrival, the house was involved with heavy fire and smoke," he said.

According to Tolland County Dispatch, along with Hebron, mutual aid included firefighters from Andover, Bolton, East Hampton, Glastonbury, Manchester and Marlborough.

Wallick explained it "took about an hour to get the fire under control." He added while it wasn't difficult to fight, "it was just a lot of fire."

Also adding to the work of firefighters was ensuring the propane tank near the house – something Wallick said was characteristic in a

lot of rural towns – remained cool.

"We didn't know how much propane was in it, but we wanted to keep it cool so it wouldn't open a relief valve and release propane, causing another hazard," he explained.

Firefighters started to be dismissed from the scene around 7:30 p.m. that evening, and Wallick explained they usually stick around to make sure any hot spots that could reignite a fire are taken care of and to assist the residents in locating personal items.

"We look for hot spots, and work with the homeowner to try to recover some personal belongings in the house," Wallick stated.

He added no one was in the house at the time of the fire, and no injuries were reported; he said the home belonged to a family with three children.

The cause of the fire is currently under investigation by the Hebron fire marshal's office.

## East Hampton Pedestrian Injured in Hit-and-Run

by John Tyczkowski

A traffic-stopper near Paul's and Sandy's Too was injured in a hit and run incident on Route 66 Tuesday afternoon.

The pedestrian, John Burtora of East Hampton, was directing traffic with a handheld stop sign in the westbound side of Route 66, police said.

Assistant Fire Chief Ken McGahee said Burtora was volunteering to direct traffic for the annual Pumpkintown USA event.

According to a police report, Allen Pelletier, 59, of Hebron, stopped for Burtora, but Jason Parent, 29, of East Hampton, who was driving behind him, failed to stop.

Parent's Hyundai struck Pelletier's Ford, according to police, which resulted in the Ford spinning counterclockwise and ending up in the eastbound lane. Parent then continued forward, struck Burtora and continued heading

westbound without stopping.

Burtora was transported to Hartford Hospital, with no official word on his injuries, and Pelletier was treated at the Marlborough Clinic and released, according to the police report.

Portland Police and State Police, as well as the East Hampton fire department, also responded to the scene.

Parent was located and arrested "in close proximity to the scene," according to police, and was charged with two counts of evading responsibility, one count of operating with a suspended license, one count of following to close and one count of distracted driving.

The investigation is still ongoing, police said.

However, McGahee said that Burtora "was going to be OK" and that he had been released from the hospital.

# Obituaries

## Colchester

### Wilbur Deforest Patch

Wilbur Deforest Patch, 85, of Colchester, beloved husband and best friend of Betty (Martin) Patch, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Sept. 17, at home, surrounded by his loving family. Born Aug. 12, 1929, in Bakersfield, Vt., he was a son of the late Leon and Mabel (Jacobs) Patch.



While still a teenager, he was a sawmill worker at Pender's Mill in Bakersfield before enlisting in the Army in 1951, serving during the Korean War. After settling in Connecticut to raise his family, he worked for the former A&P in Colchester and later as an assembler for Pratt & Whitney before his "retirement" in 1997. He would continue to work for many years thereafter with his daughter and son-in-law at Mark's United Auto Parts in Colchester.

In his spare time, he enjoyed fishing and playing cards, especially Setback; and was an active member of the Donald A. Bigelow American Legion Post No. 54 in Colchester.

In addition to his loving wife of nearly 63 years, he leaves two sons, Wayne and Jerry, both of Colchester; two daughters and sons-in-law, Darlene and Mark Goodwin of Colchester and Cheryl and Joseph Carroll of Lebanon; seven grandchildren, Jennifer; Joe (wife, Amanda) and Nicholas; Melissa (fiancé, Nick) and Sabrina (husband, Mike); and Joey and Michael; three great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandson; a sister, Phyllis Lumbra of Enosburg Falls, Vt.; dear friends, Debbie Garrison and Mike Weinkoff; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by three siblings, Helen, Merritt and Raymond.

A special thanks goes out to all of those who helped care for Wilbur during his final days, especially Debbie and Amanda.

The family received guests Sunday, Sept. 21, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service with military honors was observed that afternoon. Burial was private in Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Wounded Warriors Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Hebron

### Gerald Michael Griffin Jr.

Gerald Michael Griffin Jr., "Jerry", "PD-12", 69, of Amston, beloved husband and best friend of Pattie (O'Flaherty) Griffin, passed away peacefully in his sleep at home Thursday, Sept. 18. Born Feb. 2, 1945 in Hartford, he was the son of the late Gerald and Edna (Sando) Griffin, Sr.



Jerry worked for UPS for 31 years and was a member of Teamsters Local 671. Following his retirement, he became an active member and engineer with the Hebron Vol. Fire Dept., Inc., which also led to his membership with both the Tri-County and CT Fire Police Associations.

In the spare time he had left, he was an avid car enthusiast and member of the Kronus Car Club, cherishing his '55 Chevy; his memberships also included the Somers Antique Bottle Club, the Giant Pumpkin Growers Assn., and the CT Eastern Railroad and National Railway Historical Societies.

In addition to his beloved wife of 36 years, survivors include his son, Kris Kolaczenko of Amston; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by his sister, Marilyn DeGray.

The family received guests Tuesday, Sept. 23 from 4-7 p.m. at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester. A Chapel Service was held at the funeral home Wednesday, Sept. 24 at 10:30 a.m. Burial was private in the New Hebron Cemetery.

Donations in his memory may be made to the CT Eastern Railroad Museum, 55 Bridge St., Willimantic 06226, or the Hebron Vol. Fire Dept., Inc., P.O. Box 911, Hebron 06248. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Portland

### Charlotte S. Florkoski

Charlotte S. Florkoski, 73, of Portland, wife of the late Stanley P. Florkoski, and the only child of the late Glover and the late Charlotte Smith of Durham, passed away Monday, Sept. 22, at Wadsworth Glenn.

Born Dec. 4, 1940, in Middletown, she lived in Portland for the last 32 years. She was an avid Princess Lines vacation cruiser, took dozens of cruises and enjoyed photography, and feeding backyard birds.

She leaves her stepson, Stephen Florkoski and his wife Beth of Bethel; a daughter-in-law, Maryanne Florkoski of Windsor, wife of the late stepson Philip Florkoski; five grandchildren, Amy, Gwen, Sara, Mariah and Peter; and five great-grandchildren, Emily, Dylan, Kyla, Logan and Brady.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Sept. 27, at 10 a.m., from Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, with a Mass at 11 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary, Portland. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends may call today, Sept. 26, from 4-6 p.m., at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Portland Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480.

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

## Amston

### Gail Diane Twombly

Gail Diane (Ainslie) Twombly, 66, of Amston, formerly of East Hartford and Hartwick, N.Y., beloved wife of Richard, passed away unexpectedly Monday, Sept. 22. Born Jan. 28, 1948, in Oneonta, N.Y., she was a daughter of Laura (Rowlands) Ainslie Kane of Hartwick and the late Archie A. Ainslie.

She grew up in Hartwick, N.Y., and attended high school in Cooperstown. Gail went on to study at Hartwick College in Oneonta and later would earn her associate's degree in accounting and graduate as valedictorian from Manchester Community College.

Mrs. Twombly worked for the Connecticut Office of the State Treasurer for many years before her retirement in July of 2012.

She was a longtime member of First Church in Wethersfield. In years past, she enjoyed playing volleyball through the East Hartford Parks and Recreation Dept. She also enjoyed playing computer games with friends online, but her greatest joy was always found in her family, especially her children and grandchildren. A final gift of love was given by her through organ donation.

In addition to her loving husband of nearly 28 years and her mother, she leaves three children, Sean Twombly of Glastonbury, Michelle Courtrou and husband, Jaime of Santa Cruz, Calif., and Michael Grigsby and wife Debbie of North Carolina; three grandchildren, Kaya, Zac and Alexandria; two siblings and their spouses, Larry and Barbara Ainslie of Hartwick, N.Y., and Linda and John Tuller of New Berlin, N.Y.; and numerous extended family members and friends.

The family will receive guests from 4-7 p.m. today, Sept. 26, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service will be held at 6:30 p.m. Graveside services will be observed at 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 27, at the Hartwick Cemetery, State Hwy. 205, Hartwick, N.Y.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Hebron Vol. Fire Dept., P.O. Box 911, Hebron, CT 06248.

For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Portland

### Daniel Roman Barnett

Daniel Roman Barnett, 34, of Vermont, passed away unexpectedly Saturday, Sept. 20, at the Bradley Memorial Hospital in Southington. He was the beloved son of Roger A. "Tony" and Hai Barnett of East Hartford and Karen Lachance of Barre, Vt. He was born in Bristol April 20, 1980, the son of Roger Anthony "Tony" Barnett and Karen (Vivian) Barnett Lachance.

Danny attended elementary school in Portland, and Bristol High School and worked as a commercial and industrial painter. Having never met a person he didn't love, he was never without his best friend, his dog "Boden" and will be remembered for his love of baseball and the Boston Red Sox.

Besides his parents, he leaves behind his special friend, Jenn, and longtime friends Matt and Jessie, and numerous uncles, aunts, cousins and many additional friends in Connecticut and Vermont.

His burial and committal service will be held Saturday, Sept. 27, at 11 a.m., in the Durant Cemetery in Lower Cabot, Vt. Friends may call at the Hooker and Whitcomb Funeral Home, (802-476-3203), 7 Academy St., Barre, VT 05641 today, Sept. 26, from 6-8 p.m.

## Amston

### Bruce James Currier Jr.

Bruce "Bucky" James Currier Jr. 41, of Mansfield Center, formerly of Amston and Manchester, passed away Sunday, Sept. 21, at Hartford Hospital. Bruce was born in Manchester Aug. 11, 1973.



He is survived by his father, Bruce J. Currier and his wife Jill of Amston; his mother, Martha (Faulk) Longworth and her husband, Charles of Pace, Fla.; his two brothers, Jason Currier and his wife Jessica of Andover and Kyle Currier of Amston; his nephew, Austin Currier of Andover; his paternal grandmother, Shirley Converse of Marlborough; and his longtime companion, Kyla Shafer and her son, Zack of Mansfield Center.

Calling hours were Thursday, Sept. 25, at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester. Burial will be private in New Hebron Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105-1942.

To leave an online condolence, visit [holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com](http://holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com).

## Colchester

### Marian Elizabeth Arico

Marian Elizabeth Arico, 91, of Preston, went home to the Lord Sunday, Sept. 21, while at Apple Rehab in Colchester. Marian was born June 17, 1923, in Ledyard, to the late A. Gilbert Hagen and Mary (Gemeasky) Hagen.

In 1941, she graduated from Norwich Free Academy. She worked during World War II at Electric Boat in Groton where she also played on the softball team. In the late 1940s, Marian worked at Longo's Trucking in Preston where she met John Arico, whom she later married.

In later years, she worked at Poquetanuck School. Then she worked as the assistant to the first selectman of the Town of Preston. She worked several years at Analysis and Technology in North Stonington until her retirement when she went back to work part-time at the Preston town hall.

Marian enjoyed collecting thimbles, stringing beads, gardening, spending time with friends at Amos Lake, attending many church functions, and cooking Sunday dinners for her family. She was a member of Ledyard Center Congregational Church where she was active and involved throughout her life.

Marian is survived by her children, John Arico Jr. and wife Mary Ann of Franklin, Mary Ann Arico of Birmingham, Ala., and James A. Arico and wife Victoria of Lisbon; three grandchildren, Jason Arico, Bethany Paquette and Emily Arico; two great grandsons, Gabriel Thomas Arico and Samuel Joseph Arico, along with several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her former husband, John Arico Sr.; brothers, Arthur J. and C. Gilbert Hagen; and one sister, Virginia Manizza.

Funeral services were Thursday, Sept. 25, at Ledyard Center Congregational Church, with burial following at Avery Stoddard Cemetery in Gales Ferry. Visitation was Wednesday, Sept. 24, at the Labenski Funeral Home, 107 Boswell Ave., Norwich.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made directly to the church at 722 Colonel Ledyard Hgwy, Ledyard, CT 06339.

To leave an online condolence, visit [labenski funeralhome.com](http://labenski funeralhome.com).

## Colchester

### Barbara Wood Brown

Barbara Wood Brown, 86, recently of Covington, La., passed away Saturday, Aug. 30. Born in Teaneck, N.J., on June 10, 1928, to the late Raymond D. Wood and Mildred Upson Wood, she was raised in Westchester County, N.Y., and moved to Connecticut shortly after her graduation from Middlebury College in 1950.

Her professional career was spent as a Latin and French teacher at Bacon Academy in Colchester. She was a longtime resident of Colchester, where she married and raised her family. Barbara was an active member of the Colchester Historical Society, serving as town historian for many years.

A longstanding member of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists, as well as several other genealogical organizations, she researched family histories for countless clients nationwide. She authored two genealogical volumes. She continued her formal education at Wesleyan University, where she earned two advanced degrees. Upon retirement, she began a second career as an antiques dealer in Connecticut, then in Pennsylvania.

She is predeceased by her husband of 43 years, Lloyd W. Brown. She is survived by her two daughters, Susan M. Brown, and Grace E. Smith of Covington, La.; her son-in-law, Peter F. Smith; two grandchildren, Lauren E. Smith and Andrew F. Smith; her brother, Raymond D. Wood of Mt. Holly Springs, Pa., as well as many nieces and nephews.

Interment will be private at Exeter Cemetery in Exeter.

## Marlborough

### Peter Joseph Klein

Peter Joseph Klein, 73, of Marlborough, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family, Wednesday, Sept. 17. He was born in Middle Village, N.Y., son of the late Peter J. Sr. and Edith (Jacobi) Klein.

Peter was the owner/operator of PIK Power Corporation, the company he started in 1979. He was a Catholic deacon for 36 years, serving at St. John Fisher in Marlborough, as well as St. Paul, St. Augustine and most recently at St. Dunstan Catholic Church, all in Glastonbury. He was a member of the Economic Development Commission in Marlborough and The Freedom Boat Club. Peter enjoyed golf, power boating and traveling with his wife to Europe, South America and Asia.

Peter is survived by his beloved wife of 50 years, Irene (Eber) Klein, his children Julia Klein-Zawilinski and her husband Gary of Enfield, N.H., Jennifer Ureta and her husband Edward of Glastonbury, Judith Kerman and her husband Scott of Peoria, Ill., Janette Dziatko and her husband William of Marlborough and Robert P. Klein and his wife Lisa of Colchester; his brother, Donald Klein of Danielson, his sisters Betty Kerns and her husband Charles of Moosup and Barbara Wallen and her husband Niles of Putnam; and 14 grandchildren.

He will be dearly missed by his large extended family and many friends. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his sister Patricia Hopkins in May of this year.

Funeral services were held Monday, Sept. 22, at St. Dunstan Church, 1345 Manchester Rd., Glastonbury, followed by burial in Marlboro Cemetery, Route 66, Marlborough. Visiting hours were Sunday, Sept. 21, at The Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury, CT 06033.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to the Marlborough Food Bank, c/o Marlborough Town Hall, 26 North Main St., P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447 or Unbound (Christian Families and Aging), 1 Elmwood Ave., Kansas City, KS 66103.

For more information, to offer an online condolence or view Peter's Everlasting Memorial video tribute, visit [glastonburyfuneral.com](http://glastonburyfuneral.com).

## Colchester

### Patricia Ann Welch

Patricia Ann Welch, 80, of 16 Dogwood Ln., formerly of Norwich, died Tuesday, Sept. 16, after a brief illness, at Hartford Hospital. She was born in Norwich Dec. 30, 1933, daughter of the late David Lawrence LeVarge and Nellie Katherine (Horelick) LeVarge.

Pat graduated from Norwich Free Academy Class of 1951 and worked for many years as the Statistical Clerk at the Norwich Town Clerk's Office. Mrs. Welch was a communicant of St. Andrew's Church in Colchester. She was a dedicated mother, hospice volunteer and avid reader.

Pat was predeceased by her husband, Daniel Ira Welch who passed on April 24, 2000. In addition to her husband, Pat was predeceased by two brothers, Richard Lawrence LeVarge and David Clifford LeVarge.

She is survived by a daughter, Dr. Patricia Welch Dittman and son-in-law David J. Dittman; grandson, David Joseph Dittman II of Coral Springs, Fla.; sister, Shirley Elaine Barton of Portland, Ore.; and a brother, Paul John LeVarge of Colchester.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Monday, Sept. 22, at St. Andrew's Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial followed at Maplewood Cemetery in Norwich. Visitation was Sunday, Sept. 21, at the Cummings-Gagne Funeral Home, 82 Cliff St., Norwich.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made in her name to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

To send a condolence or for more information, visit [cummings-gagnefh.com](http://cummings-gagnefh.com).

## Marlborough

### Elizabeth M. "Betty" Weir

Elizabeth M. "Betty" Weir, 81, of Marlborough, died Thursday, Sept. 18, at Hartford Hospital. Born Aug. 19, 1933, in Hartford, daughter of the late Leverett and Marjorie (Fisher) Weir, she was raised in Glastonbury and had lived in Marlborough for the past 35 years.



Prior to her retirement, she was a secretary for the Goodison Painting Co. Betty loved dogs and to feed and watch birds. She played the organ and in her younger years enjoyed traveling. Most of all, Betty loved her family.

She is survived by two sisters, Diane Lingner of Marlborough, Ruby Palazzi and her husband Joseph of East Glastonbury, and several nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

She was predeceased by a brother, Ernest "Bud" Weir; a sister, Dorothy Aceto and her husband Paul Aceto; a nephew, Thomas Lingner; and a niece, Patricia Sloan.

The family would like to thank the staff at Hartford Hospital for their care and compassion.

The funeral service was held Monday, Sept. 22, in the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury. Burial followed in Neipsic Cemetery, East Glastonbury. Friends called at the funeral home on Monday, prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

For online condolences, visit [mulryanfh.com](http://mulryanfh.com).

## Marlborough

### Gordon W. Miller

Gordon W. Miller, 91, of East Hartford, formerly of Marlborough and Tolland, died peacefully Sunday, Sept. 14, at his home, with his family at his side. Gordon was the beloved husband of Barbara, and the late Elizabeth Miller.

Born July 10, 1923, in Rockville, son of the late Edward W. and Elsie (Ballantyne) Miller, he grew up in Rockville and graduated from the former Manchester Trade School. Gordon served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II with the rank of first lieutenant as a pilot for troop transport planes. He then began a long and successful career as a skilled carpenter, woodworker, and cabinet maker. He retired from Peerless Woodworking Co. after more than 40 years with the company.

Once retired, he ventured out full time in his recreational vehicle and traveled cross-country, his favorite location being the Southwestern United States and the Big Bend National Park area. He was an avid hiker and enjoyed hiking until he was 82.

In addition to his loving wife, he is survived by three children, Gordon R. Miller and his wife, Carol, of Herndon, Va., Sheila Sharp and her husband, Donald, of Shelburne, Vt., Ronald E. Miller and his wife, Julie, of Tobyhanna, Pa.; seven grandchildren, Carol, Linda, Rebecca, Carrie, David, Eric, and Mary; and 11 great-grandchildren. Other survivors include Barbara's daughter, Melissa Knox, and granddaughter Kaitlyn.

He was predeceased by his grandson, Gordon J. Miller, and two brothers, Irwin Miller and Russell Miller.

The family would like to extend a special thanks to his caregivers, Mary, Veta, and Heather, as well as the staff of the Visiting Nurse and Health Services in Vernon.

Funeral services were held today, Sept. 19, at 11 a.m., at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester. Burial with military honors followed at Marlborough Cemetery in Marlborough. Calling hours were held Thursday, Sept. 18, at the funeral home.

Memorial donations may be made to the National Parks Foundation, 1201 Eye St., NW Suite 550B, Washington, D.C. 20005.

To sign the online register book, go to [holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com](http://holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com).

## Portland

### Gerald I. Binnington Sr.

Gerald "Pop" I. Binnington Sr., 94, of Portland, husband of the late Barbara (Howard) Binnington, passed away Monday, Sept. 22, at Portland Care and Rehab. He was born Feb. 23, 1920, in Middletown, son of the late Rev. Percy and Winifred (Roberts) Binnington.

Gerald met his beloved wife of 70 years in 1938 and they married July 4, 1942. He was a World War II veteran serving in the U.S. Army with the 395th Signal Aviation Company as a staff sergeant with campaigns in Tunisia, Sicily, Naples, Normandy, Northern France and the Rhineland from 1942-45.

He worked at Wilcox Lace as a lace weaver on large machines until the mill closed in 1959. He then went on to work at the Connecticut Atomic Nuclear Plant for a few years before being hired by Pratt & Whitney to work in the engineering department for 35 years.

Gerald is survived by his four children, Gerald Binnington Jr. of Portland, Candy Valk of Portland, Robert Binnington and his wife Karen of Portland, Marisa Aletta and her husband Frank of Middletown; eight grandchildren, Alicia Currier, Thomas Valk, Jr., Jennifer Binnington, Matthew and Courtney Binnington, Michael, Danielle and Brett Aletta; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Besides his wife, he was predeceased by his brother, John Percy Binnington.

The family would like to thank the staff at Portland Care and Rehab for the care and compassion shown to Gerald and his family.

The funeral service will be held today, Sept. 26, at 10 a.m., at Trinity Church, Main Street, Portland. Burial with military honors will be held at Trinity Cemetery. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Trinity Church, 345 Main Street, Portland, CT 06480 or to the Portland Fire Department EMT, PO Box 71, Portland, CT 06480.

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

## From the Editor's Desk

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Well, that's one way to make a memorable exit.

As medicinal marijuana dispensaries opened this week in Connecticut, there are people in other states across the country looking to legalize the weed altogether. Among them are folks in Alaska – which led to a TV news reporter there very abruptly, and publicly, quitting her job Sunday night.

Charlo Greene of KTVA in Anchorage had just finished reporting a story on the Alaska Cannabis Club, a group that, according to its Facebook page, "connects medical marijuana patients in need to Alaskan cardholders with green." Greene – which is the professional name of Charlotte Egbe – then told viewers, "Everything you've heard is why I, the actual owner of the Alaska Cannabis Club, will be dedicating all my energy toward fighting for freedom and for fairness, which begins with legalizing marijuana here in Alaska. And as for this job, well, not that I have a choice, but f— it, I quit." Greene then walked off camera.

The camera immediately cut to a very frazzled anchorwoman, who didn't appear to know what to do. After first apologizing for Greene's remarks, she then paused, said "we'll be right back," and then immediately went back to reporting the news. (I guess the channel changed its mind about cutting to commercial.)

KTVA's news director, Bert Rudman, apologized for Greene's language and said she had been fired Sunday night – but indicated it wasn't for dropping the 'F' bomb on the air. Rather, it's because, as the owner of a pro-pot group, Greene shouldn't have been reporting on the marijuana legalization issue.

"She had a personal and business stake in the issue she was reporting, but did not disclose that interest to us," Rudman said in a statement. "At KTVA, we strive to live up to the highest journalistic standards of fairness and transparency. Sunday's breach of those standards is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated."

Greene, meanwhile, told the Associated Press on Monday that she knew about a month ago she would be leaving the way she did, but that no one else at the station knew anything about it.

Greene – who had apparently been criticized in the past by two anti-legalization groups for biased reporting – told the AP she felt she had always done a fair job. She said that, as a reporter, she'd always fact-checked, and was unbiased about the issue.

"I'm passionate about doing my job, and at the time my job was being a journalist," she said.

Now, it is perfectly possible to report without bias on an issue even if, on a personal level, you strongly lean toward one side or the other. But Rudman was quite right – Greene had an obligation to let the station know, when the legalization story started getting reported on, that she was the head of the Alaska Cannabis Club.

Meanwhile, I couldn't help but notice Greene seemed to talk about her journalism days in the past tense – "at the time my job was being a journalist" – indicating she's on to another line of work. Which may be a good idea. The lapse of ethics combined with "f— it, I quit" probably would keep her off of TV news for a while.

\* \* \*

If, like me, you always meant to try those new Burger King "Satisfries" but just never got around to it – well, you snoozed, and you lost.

The fries are no longer.

Satisfries were introduced to the BK menu last fall, as a healthier alternative to the fast food chain's regular French fries. The Satisfries were made with a batter that absorbed less oil than BK's other fries, which resulted in fries with 40 percent less fat and 30 percent fewer calories than the standard fries.

Though the company said the new fries tasted great, it kept the standard fries on the menu, and sales of the healthier fries (which, for the record, cost a little bit more than the healthier ones) weren't overly impressive. So, last month, Burger King gave its franchisees the opportunity to drop Satisfries if they wanted to – and fully two-thirds of them said "yes, please."

Who knows, maybe it really did boil down to the fact they cost a little bit more, but for whatever reason, Satisfries appear to have failed – adding another entry to the checkered history fast food places has with healthier options. Sure, you can find salads of varying quality at BK or McDonald's or Wendy's, but it seems that whenever fast food chains try to get innovative with their healthier options, more often than not they strike out. (In fact, even those aforementioned

salads don't seem to do that well; McDonald's CEO Don Thompson told investors last year salads account for only 2-3 percent of the chain's annual sales.)

*Time* recently mentioned four more notable failures of chain's attempts to go healthy. The first, Dairy Queen's Breeze, I remember. It was a Blizzard – that delicious mixture of soft-serve ice cream and various toppings just about every ice cream place has tried to copy over the years – but with frozen yogurt instead of ice cream. I ordered it a few times. It was a way to feel better about eating a Blizzard, and the frogrut, I thought, tasted similar enough to their ice cream that you didn't really notice the difference.

But while I may have been a fan, the Breeze never took off. In fact, so few people ordered it, Dairy Queen reported stores were having to throw out yogurt because it was going bad. DQ stuck by the Breeze for about 10 years, but discontinued it in 2000. Now, of course, frozen yogurt is all the rage, but it doesn't appear DQ will be bringing the Breeze back anytime soon.

*Time* also mentioned Pizza Hut's "The Natural," which I only recall with the vaguest of memories. And for good reason: it lasted a mere two years. The Natural was an all-natural organic pizza, made with multigrain crust sweetened with honey. It cost \$1 more than a regular pizza – which doesn't feel like a whole lot considering organic *anything* costs more. But, the new offering bombed. It debuted in 2008, but, *Time* reported, it "quietly disappeared" by 2010.

McDonald's was noted for its Fruit and Walnut Salad, a mixture of apples, grapes, walnuts, and low-fat yogurt. I never had it, but that actually sounds pretty good, and *Health* magazine included it on its list of "America's Healthiest Mall Food," but McDonald's yanked the salad in 2013 after, a company spokeswoman told Reuters, "listening to our customers."

And perhaps the most famous fast food McDonald's "McLean Deluxe" made the list. The burger was introduced in 1991, and was a 91 percent fat-free burger. How was that possible? Well, through 91 percent lean beef, which is fine – but word soon leaked the burger was also made with carrageenan (a.k.a. seaweed), which apparently turned consumers off. Within a few years, the McLean Deluxe was no more.

But I have my own theory as to the failure of the above-mentioned items, and other "healthier" innovations by fast food joints – and it's not because of carrageenan (which is in more stuff than maybe you know) or because it may cost a teensy bit more than the "less healthy" alternatives. Simply put, when people go to McDonald's, or Burger King, or Pizza Hut, or Dairy Queen, they know what they're getting into. For the most part, people don't go there expecting to eat healthy. They want to indulge; they figure they're going to blow a certain number of calories and they're ok with that.

If someone wants to eat healthier, chances are they don't have to drive very long before they come across one of the ever-more-ubiquitous Subways. But if they're going to a burger joint or an ice cream shop, they don't want to eat healthy. They know they're not going to, and they've planned accordingly. Otherwise they wouldn't be there.

For the record, *Time* agrees with me, saying that "when customers are up at the counter or eyeing the drive-thru menu, the idea of low-calorie anything probably isn't top of mind. It just doesn't seem satisfying enough."

I applaud these fast-food chains for trying to develop healthier choices – but at the same time, I'm just not surprised when they fail.

\* \* \*

Lastly, as many of you know, the Portland Fair is coming fast – it's scheduled for Oct. 10, 11 and 12. And I know many have wondered if the Route 17A bridge – a.k.a., the Carr Brook Bridge – will be done in time for the annual event. Fair organizers have been assuring people the construction project on the bridge will be done by then. And now Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield is too.

Susan sent out an email Tuesday afternoon saying she's received word from the state Department of Transportation that, barring any unforeseen circumstances, the bridge will reopen no later than Wednesday, Oct. 8, at 6 a.m. – that's right, a mere two days before the fair makes its 2014 debut.

Talk about cutting it close. But at least the bridge will be done, and the show will indeed go on.

\* \* \*

See you next week.