

RIVEREAST

## News Bulletin

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

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**Great Goats...** On Saturday, June 20, at the Southern Vermont ADGA Dairy Goat Show, in Marlborough, Vt., competing against over 100 others from across New England, Craig Kaeser and Dr. Robert McLaughlin each won the highest awards. Kaeser won Best Doe in Senior Show with his 7-year-old LaMancha doe, Lady Bug. In a separately-sanctioned show, McLaughlin won Best Doe in Junior Show with his 3-month-old Toggenburg doe, Bria. Both Kaeser and McLaughlin reside in East Hampton and breed and competitively show their dairy goats as a hobby.

## \$310,000 in Cuts Eyed for Belltown Budget

by John Tyczkowski

In the wake of yet another referendum rejection of the proposed 2015-16 East Hampton budget, the Board of Finance met Tuesday and recommended \$310,000 in cuts, which would bring the town budget to \$41.07 million.

But in East Hampton, the Town Council has the final say on whether the finance board's recommended cuts will indeed be made; the council ultimately postponed its vote Tuesday, instead scheduling a special meeting for next week to reach a final determination.

If set at \$41.07 million, the budget would be a 1.94 percent, or \$782,000, increase over the 2014-15 spending package. It would also feature a 0.66 mill increase for an overall mill rate of 27.80, which would translate to a 2.43 percent tax increase.

Specifically, the finance board's proposal included a \$200,000 reduction to the Board of Education, an \$85,000 reduction to road repair funds, a \$20,000 reduction to Conservation-Lake Commission funds and a \$5,000 reduction in funds for the Middle Haddam Public Library.

Before the council postponed its vote Tuesday, councilors did lean toward a slightly altered proposal.

One of the proposals floated at the meeting included keeping the \$310,000 total, but taking the \$20,000 difference out of the Board of Education instead of the Conservation-Lake Commission.

One area of contention for the town council discussion not touched on in the finance board meeting was the half-year police officer posi-

tion, totaling \$47,000.

East Hampton Police Sgt. Paul Battista spoke during public comment about the daily challenges the department faces.

"If we could bring the department back to 15 or 16 guys, we could keep the town safe and not be run ragged," he said. "The guys are moaning and groaning, and it's getting taxing on us."

In particular, Battista talked about pulling double shifts on holidays and missing out on family time, as well as regularly working 12-16 hours multiple days each week.

"But we will continue to provide service to the town as we always have," he reaffirmed.

Police Chief Sean Cox also said Battista injured his foot and has been working in a walking cast for the last several weeks.

To that, Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said, "I'm not a happy person when people working for me are working injured."

Also during public comment, Officer Mark Pekar said the town's police force is "purely reactive," and the town needs more officers to engage in community policing.

"We don't have a DARE program, and we have no positive contact with youth in this town, for example," he said.

Pekar also said the town loses money with the traffic details filled by officers from Portland, Cromwell and Middletown.

"East Hampton can't pick up all of those jobs because of the staffing issue," he said of the projects at Routes 66 and 196 and the natural

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## Local Band Celebrates 100th Performance

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

An area band reached a musical milestone recently as they participated in their 100th performance.

The Modern Riffs, which performs a variety of music including jazz (its forte), swing, classic rock and pop, with instruments that range from saxophone and trombone to drums and bass, has been making music since 2008. At that time, it was founded by Marlborough resident Bruce Phelps as a way for high school students to get involved with music outside the typical school setting.

Since its founding, approximately 27 students have been a part of the band, and last Thursday, June 25, current members played gig number 100 at Sadler's Restaurant during the Marlborough Music Festival hosted by the Marlborough Business Association.

Speaking about the band's founding this week, Phelps said, "There's no real explanation [to why it started] except that it was a cool idea Kim and I had," he stated, referring to Colchester resident Kim DuBois, his band co-manager. "We wanted to get talented students involved [with music] outside of the usual

school environment."

Phelps added he never expected the band to have the longevity that it did.

"We had no conception that this would ever last this long, but it has," Phelps said, explaining the Riffs operated like any other band, soliciting and competing for gigs.

Band members come from RHAM, Bacon Academy, and Lyman Memorial High School and may stay with the band for 1-3 years. After graduating high school, they move on to become alumni. Phelps said it was difficult to lose three to four members a year due to graduation, but added the kids "are pretty resilient."

"[The students] work together and work things out," Phelps said. "They develop their own chemistry."

Over the years, Phelps added the only real change in the band apart from the participants has been his own learning curve and being able to manage them better as time goes on.

"I was scared to death at first" Phelps said. "Now I'm more and more comfortable with it."

He added regarding the students, "I learn a lot from them."

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The Modern Riffs, a band composed of high school students from area schools, recently participated in their 100th performance. The event took place at Sadler's Restaurant during the Marlborough Music Festival hosted by the Marlborough Business Association June 25.

**Belltown Budget cont. from Front Page**

gas pipeline installation. “And the town loses revenue every time we can’t do those overtime jobs.”

Cox also said, in the face of *Rivereast* letters to the editor opining the current police situation in East Hampton is fine, no one has actually spoken with him about the department’s challenges.

“They have not come down to look at my schedule, or to look at how many days there are when we have just two people on a shift, or at how many days when the chief is the third man,” he said.

Each shift is supposed to have two patrol officers plus a supervisory officer, traditionally a sergeant.

Councilor Mark Philhower proposed a budget that would provide for a \$263,000 reduction from the Board of Education and cutting the half-year police officer position, for a total of \$310,000.

That proposal was defeated 4-2 (councilor Ted Hintz Jr. was absent) along party lines.

Philhower warned including the half-year position would assure future budget defeats, and eventually lead to no mill rate increase whatsoever.

“And when [the mill rate increase] reaches zero, you’re going to have to lay off one or more of our guys,” he said.

Council chair Barbara Moore said that the “department is going in reverse,” and that a recent increase in violent incidents necessitates more police.

“If we can’t protect our residents, it’s a pretty sad day,” she said.

Philhower responded by saying a large force was unnecessary.

“When we had 15, I believe that’s when we had an unsolved murder in town,” he said, re-

ferring to the 1998 murder of Trudy Ochankowski, which resident Gerald Brian Tuttle was eventually arrested for in 2013. “You can’t have a cop on every doorstep; it’s not affordable.”

Lastly, Philhower said, “people have made it clear they want no new hires” in all departments, not just police.

This isn’t the first time a possible new hire has proven a sticking point in the budget process. Last year, when crafting the 2014-15 budget, a full-time police captain position was initially included. After the budget failed twice at referendum, the new position was removed; the spending package then passed with voters at a third referendum.

Council vice chairman Kevin Reich suggested a special meeting to have the chief speak about his department’s challenges.

“I feel there is a lot of misinformation out there,” he said. “What’s another week if we can get more information and make the right decision for this town?”

“In East Hampton, everything is drama,” Reich added.

The council scheduled a special meeting Tuesday, July 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the East Hampton Middle School library to include a breakdown of the police staffing challenges by Cox, a presentation on road repairs by Public Works director Phil Sissick and budget questions of other department heads.

In addition, the meeting will allow residents to tell the Town Council directly why they voted ‘yes’ or ‘no’ in the budget referendums, and provide input as to what they would like to see in the fourth budget.

A possible vote to accept a proposed budget and set a referendum date is also scheduled for next week’s meeting.

**Local Band cont. from Front Page**

Phelps said the participants brought more to the band than just their musical skills - like their high energy.

“We feed off of their energy,” Phelps stated, adding the credit for the band’s accomplishments belonged to the members.

“It’s really the kids” he said of reaching performance 100. “They do well and get invited back. The credit belongs to them. A hundred gigs is pretty darn good.”

Band members however, said some of that credit should go to Phelps.

“Bruce is one of the most hardworking, talented, humorous, and wise people that I know, and I am so grateful to have the privilege to know him,” shared Brianna Tracy, the vocalist of the group. “It is hard to find someone who will put their own time aside to work hard for the benefit of others, and yet, Bruce does it all the time in The Modern Riffs.”

Tracy added Phelps is “talented beyond belief” but also humble and never shows off.

“He continuously passes down pieces of wisdom and advice and pushes us to be both better musicians and better people,” Tracy said. “People may think that The Modern Riffs is just another local band, but in all honesty, we’re not just a band: we’re a family, and we are so lucky to have Bruce as our leader.”

Senior Adam Busa said the band has had a bigger impact on him than he thought it would.

“Hearing [Phelps] play has made me grow a lot in terms of [improvisation] and blending,” Busa said. “He’s always got a positive or constructive comment. He’s never harsh.”

Busa said he wishes participation in the band didn’t end with graduation.

“It’s a good thing that others get the opportunity, but it’s hard to go,” he stated.

Senior Mari Larcheveque shared Busa’s sen-

timent, saying participation in the Riffs was an amazing opportunity.

“You don’t get to play in a smaller group at school,” Larcheveque said. Phelps “makes us all comfortable playing our part. We need all the different instruments.”

Earlier this year, DuBuis nominated Phelps to be the Hebron Women’s Club 2015 Citizen of the Year. As part of that nomination, she solicited comments from parents of students who have gone through the Riffs – and they too, had praise for Phelps’ work.

“With his encouragement and subtle expectations for excellence, he lets the kids discover their gifts on their own,” one parent said. “He then allows them the space, through performance, to share what they have discovered.”

Another parent thanked Phelps for how the band benefits the students.

“The Riffs share a bond of camaraderie, support and encouragement that is so unique and empowering. This empowerment carries over to other aspects of their lives giving the kids a sense of direction and self-esteem that helps them to succeed as well as to support the success of others” the parent stated.

Now that the band has achieved 100 performances, Phelps said he hopes The Modern Riffs continue down the path it’s been headed.

“If we get asked to go to bigger venues, we would take it,” Phelps said. “We’ll wait and see. We try and keep standards up and see where things take us.”

Current band members include Busa, Larcheveque, Tracy, Justin Gurry, Alyson Litwin, Ryan Litwin, Ryan Masonti, Jacob Ouillette, Aaron Ouillette, and Jessie Kirsch.

More information on the band along with video clips of their music can be found on their website, [modernriffs.com](http://modernriffs.com).

**Observations & Ruminations**

by Mike Thompson

Okay, first things first – we’ve got a little bit of housekeeping news to share with you.

The upshot of a fairly disastrous technological turn of events at the offices of the *Glastonbury Citizen* and *Rivereast News Bulletin* last week is that we’ve now got a new Internet service provider.

It’s a change for the better, we all feel, but a byproduct of this change is that the old [rivereast@snet.net](mailto:rivereast@snet.net) email address is no more. Effective immediately, all email that you were sending to that address must be submitted to [bulletin@glcitizen.com](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com).

For many of you, this won’t be a change; [bulletin@glcitizen.com](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com) has been the *Rivereast*’s alternate email address for the past several years. But I know a lot of you were still using the old SNET address – and for those of you that were, the time’s come to make a change. So update all of your contact lists and address books accordingly.

And let me point out the main *Rivereast* address is the only one changing; the email addresses you may have for the legals and classifieds departments, as well as the addresses of your individual sales representatives, will stay the same. It’s only my address – the place where you send listings, news releases, letters to the editor and other similar items – that is changing.

Again, that new address is [bulletin@glcitizen.com](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com).

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It wasn’t knocking it out of the park so much as barely clearing the fence – it was a 5-4 vote, after all – but the U.S. Supreme Court last Friday did the right thing, and made gay marriage the law of the land.

Finally, in all 50 states, marriage is based on what it should have been based on all along – love, not the gender of the couples.

I’ve advocated gay marriage in this space before – and, as I’ve also stated before, I’ve been immensely proud Connecticut was one of the very first states in the country to allow gay marriage. It’s one of those issues where it’s tough for me to get my head around the strident opposition to it.

Love makes a marriage – plain and simple. There should be nothing else.

The vast majority of those who oppose it seem to base their opposition in the handful of lines in the Bible denouncing homosexuality. But a few years ago, *The Huffington Post* had an interesting analysis of the Biblical lines about homosexuality. In short, there are only seven passages in the Bible referring to homosexuality – and of those, only three are from the New Testament, and in fact, none of them came from Jesus.

The strongest lines about homosexuality – the ones stating that if a man sleeps with another man it is an “abomination” – come from the Book of Leviticus, a book that, as the *Post* notes, contains an awful lot of codes that were either contradicted in the New Testament or are have historically been ignored by Christians.

What are some of these banned by Leviticus? Eating fat. Touching an unclean animal. Letting your hair become unkempt. Tearing your clothes. Eating an animal that doesn’t both chew cud and have a divided hoof. Eating – or touching – seafood that doesn’t have a fin or scales. Going to church within 33 days after giving birth to a boy. Going to church within 66 days after giving birth to a girl. Trimming your beard. Cutting your hair at the sides. Mixing fabrics in clothing.

(I’m reminded of an exchange in an old *Simpsons* episode in which Marge asks her pastor, Rev. Lovejoy, if divorce is a sin. Lovejoy replies, “Have you ever read this thing? Technically, we’re not supposed to go the bathroom.”)

I obviously don’t know every person on the planet, but I’d venture to guess very few – if any – Christians obey every single one of those Levitical laws. So why single out the passage against homosexuals?

Also, as I said earlier: Jesus never said a thing about homosexuals. He’s obviously the main figure of Christianity; we’re all encouraged to follow his teachings, live the way he taught. And he preached love, not hate. So I don’t see a whole lot in Jesus’ teachings to support disapproval of homosexuals.

Others have argued gay marriage goes against the sanctity of marriage, that it violates it somehow. What gets me is some of the people arguing this – including that wonderful moral compass Donald Trump – have been divorced two, three, four times. So two people of the same gender getting married makes a mockery of the institution but changing spouses like they were pairs of socks does not?

And then there’s of course a very simple, and very valid, argument for gay marriage: The “who cares?” argument. I’ve said this many times over the years: if two people love each other, and want to share that love with one another, then why should it be anyone else’s concern? They’re not hurting anybody; they’re not committing any crimes. They’re proclaiming their love for one another. If gay people can get married, it doesn’t make a marriage of two heterosexual people any less real.

Nobody has been harmed by what the Supreme Court decided last Friday; the only thing that happened is that people who love each other can declare their love for one another in a way previously not allowed to them. How is this a bad thing?

Not surprisingly, some Republican presidential candidates swiftly blasted the decision, including former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, who labeled it “judicial tyranny.” But Sen. Ted Cruz took the cake as far as absurd overreactions goes. The gay marriage ruling came a day after the Supreme Court voted to uphold Obamacare. After the gay marriage verdict, Cruz told a crowd that “the last 24 hours at the United States Supreme Court were among the darkest hours of our nation.” Really, Senator?

Cruz later tweeted that there should be a Constitutional amendment subjecting Supreme Court justices should be subject to periodic retention elections. Again: really, Senator? How childish can you be? You didn’t like what they said so it’s time to turn the Supreme Court justices out?

It’s been interesting to watch some people this past week lambast the Supreme Court for simply doing its job. Its role is as the final legal authority on issues like this. The Constitution defines its role as such. Yet even one of the court’s own justices, conservative Antonin Scalia, criticized the court’s involvement, saying the issue of same-sex marriage was being decided by “a select, patrician, highly-unrepresentative panel of nine.”

Scalia had no problem being part of that “select, patrician” group that ruled on Obamacare the day before. And if you want to go way back, Scalia had no qualms being on that “highly-unrepresentative panel of nine” that in 2000 gave the presidency to George Bush despite Al Gore actually winning the popular vote.

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land. It exists to be, to quote the Constitution, the “judicial power of the United States.” It’s the court’s job to rule on matters like this. Sometimes the court is going to be divided on issues; that’s why there is an odd number of people on it. Scalia’s objection seemed a little like Cruz’s (although perhaps not quite as juvenile): I don’t like what we’re saying; therefore, I don’t think we should be allowed to say it.

Fortunately, the majority of Scalia’s colleagues disagreed with him. Gay marriage is now the law in all 50 states – which is exactly the way it should be.

Love makes a marriage. It’s that simple.

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See you next week – and don’t forget: [bulletin@glcitizen.com](mailto:bulletin@glcitizen.com) is the way to email the *Rivereast* now.

# Marlborough School Board Wraps Fiscal Year with \$107,000 Surplus

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The local Board of Education ended the newly-wrapped 2014-15 fiscal year with \$107,594 – and potentially even more – and, after some debate, the board voted last week to keep the vast majority of that money.

While some board members initially advocated returning the money to the town, in the end the board voted unanimously June 25 to spend approximately \$105,000 of the surplus on items that had been trimmed during this year's budget-crafting process, as well as other items on the school board's wish list.

At the meeting, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz presented a long list of items that can now be purchased with the surplus.

Those items include two FIRST Lego Robotics sets, Chromebooks with a cart, iPads, laptops for teachers, library furniture, preschool art room furniture, access points for the wireless Internet, Epson projectors, resource materials, kindergarten chairs and furniture, third grade chairs and furniture, general playground repairs, and testing resources.

Ultimately, the board voted to spend no more than the \$110,000 needed for the list of items, and anything beyond that in surplus would be returned to the town. (This was later reduced to \$105,000 after some estimates for the items came in lower than expected.)

Sklarz said the district has yet to receive its last Medicaid payment, which would increase the surplus and, therefore, the amount going to the town.

Calling it a "considerable fund balance," Sklarz explained that most of the fund balance came from various places in the budget while \$57,000 of the surplus was from excess cost for special education.

"We have a fund balance because we were very frugal the second half of the year," Sklarz said. "If we fund them now, you will not see [the items] in future budgets."

Sklarz recommended the board be transparent, and send to the town any surplus beyond what is needed for the extra items.

"It's difficult for me," board member Betty O'Brien said. "The town is projecting five percent increases in taxes for the next three years. I have difficulty taking all the money and not giving back to the town."

Board member Louise Concodello said she felt like O'Brien, but advocated keeping \$87,000 of the surplus, since that was the amount the Board of Finance had out from the Board of Education's proposed budget.

Other board members, though, wanted to see more than that. Board member Judith Kaplan pointed out that the surplus money is money allocated for education and is "education money to spend on the students."

Board member Mimi LaPoint stressed the school system should keep the surplus, since it represents money the school system saved the school saved – and provides an incentive to save funds in the future.

"I'm conflicted," board chair Ruth Kelly said. "I see both sides. Half of me says 'yes, we need these,' and the other half knows the next five years are going to be terrible years. I don't know where I stand."

Sue Rapelye, the newest board member, said she was also having a tough time with the decision – and asked Cliff Denniss, a member of the Board of Finance who was sitting in the audience, what the town does with the surplus money if given back to the town.

"It goes back to the undesignated fund [balance]," Denniss said. "It could be used as revenue to help taxes or to replace crumbling culverts."

Denniss stressed he could not confirm the money would definitely go to alleviate taxes.

O'Brien said she was "disappointed" by hearing the surplus wouldn't be guaranteed to go to tax relief – so she joined her other board members in voting to go ahead and purchase the wanted items.

The motion was passed unanimously (member Robert Clarke was absent).

During public comment, Denniss, who stressed he was speaking as an individual, said he was glad the board was thinking about future budgets. But he also warned the board the recent trend of hefty surpluses likely won't be forgotten next budget season.

"A \$107,000 surplus this year. Last year was \$80,000. The year before that was \$200,000," he said. "How do you explain you need more money when you have six-figure surpluses especially talking that the school population is decreasing?"

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During the meeting, the board also reviewed the \$11,000 afterschool program it had put in place with a Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) grant.

"There are some things we need to improve upon and some things we're doing well," Sklarz said.

Marlborough Elementary School Assistant Principal Kim Kelley walked the board through a presentation about the program's successes and things to change.

The program, which services grades four, five

and six, is called Providing Additional Assistance for Students, and 35 students participated in it this past school year. Students were grouped in small groups of five or fewer students, would have a snack and then go right to work. Selection for students was based on various testing data and teacher recommendations.

"In a class of 20, you can blend in," MES Principal Dan White said. "In a group of three or four, you can't blend in."

The program was aimed at reinforcing things the students were learning in the classroom, using data to identify holes in learning and included some questions written in a style similar to the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests.

"The data showed a decent amount of growth," Kelley said.

The only grade level that did not show as much growth was sixth grade although Kelley said administrators are wondering if that data was impacted by a lot of testing at the same time at the end of May. Sixth grade students had SBAC testing along with their other normal testing back to back in only a few weeks.

"For some students, the final data point in late May was an anomaly," Kelley said.

Some changes for next year, granted the school receives the REAP grant again for the program, will be keeping the program from grades four to six only, "graduating" kids from the program as they succeeded, collecting more data and having snack as a large group in the beginning rather than in individual classrooms.

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The Board of Education won't meet again until Thursday, Aug. 27, at 7 p.m. at MES.

## Marlborough Police News

6/26: State Police said Alfonso Soto, 49, of 13 Hilltop Farm Rd., Auburn, Mass., was arrested and charged with DUI, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and failure to drive in the proper lane.

6/29: State Police said Maria Pellot, 30, of 128 Linden St., New Britain, was arrested and charged with violation of a protective order. In the same incident, police also charged Joel Villajorge, 35, of 713 Stanley St., New Britain, with violation of a protective order.

## Hebron Police News

6/25: State Police said Kyle Lebel, 30, of 80 Wellswood Rd., was arrested and charged with criminal mischief and disorderly conduct.

## East Hampton Police News

6/12: Timothy L. Minor, 47, of 68 North Main St., U48, was arrested and charged with failure to drive right and driving under the influence, East Hampton Police said.

6/19: Police said Brian Gazso, 46, of 18 Daly Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault, second-degree threatening, disorderly conduct and interfering with police/resisting arrest, after an investigation into a domestic violence incident.

6/20: Julianne M. Tasca, 20, of 42 Middletown Ave., was arrested and charged with possession of heroin, police said.

6/21: Scott Spicer, 19, of 76 High St., Portland, was arrested and charged with failure to drive right, possession of alcohol by a minor and driving under the influence, police said.

# Annual Portland Fireworks Resume After Year Off

by John Tyczkowski

The show did *not* go on last year – due to construction at Carr Brook on Route 17A – but the Portland Fireworks are back in business this year, and will blast off at the Exchange Club Fairgrounds Saturday, July 11.

The rain date is Sunday, July 12.

Parking will be available at the fairgrounds, and the gates will open at 5 p.m., and the raffle drawing, as well as a 50/50 raffle drawing, will occur at 9 p.m. (winners do not need to be present to win).

The fireworks will begin at 9:30 p.m. after a short ceremony dedicating the fireworks to five "Pillars of the Community" who have passed away in the past few years and who are "sorely missed by all who knew them," Portland Fireworks Committee chair Sharon Hoy said.

Those five notable town residents include Charlie Jarzabek, Joe Keser, Michael Rossitto, Jim Tierney and Carl Winicki.

Jarzabek, who died in 2013, was an animal control officer in town for nearly 25 years, and lived in Portland for 50 of his 52 years. He was also a member of the Middlesex Historical Society and was an avid collector of Civil War-era Gettysburg memorabilia.

Keser was a lifelong resident of Portland, and had served as the vice president of Keser's Flowers in Glastonbury, a five-generation fam-

ily floral business, from 1986 until he passed away earlier this year. He was known for his love of sports, especially baseball and football, and his integrity.

Rossitto, who passed away in 2014, was another lifelong resident, and the owner of the local F&W Caterers. He was instrumental in helping the Portland Agricultural Fair get started. His business also was a regular vendor at the fair each year, and he was known for his community focus.

Tierney, who died in 2013, lived in Portland his whole life and in 2005 was recognized as the Irish Person of the Year by the Portland/Middletown Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. He was also a charter member of the Cellar Savers Fire Museum and a member of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department for three decades.

Winicki was perhaps best known in town as "Zah," and ran Zah's Bait and Tackle, a family business his father started in 1935 and which resident Mark Grover now continues, in its 80th year. Winicki, who passed away earlier this year, was known in town for his love of flyfishing and his eagerness to help those interested get into the sport, through advice and stories.

In terms of the fireworks themselves, Ocean State Pyrotechnics will return this year to orchestrate the 30-minute show.

"Portland has offered fireworks for over 20 years, and it's a family event, attended by both young and old," she said.

Regarding what makes Portland's show special, Hoy said "there's not a bad seat on the field," and said the popular Wall of Fire finale will make its return this year as well.

Small Town Roots, a local country and southern rock band with three Portland residents as members, will provide pre-show entertainment from 6:30-9 p.m.

Food vendors will be on site offering hamburgers, hot dogs, popcorn, ice cream and drinks. Also, the Fireworks Committee will sell light-up novelties, and there will be a salute to veterans that night as well, where veterans will be asked to stand and be recognized by their community.

Tickets for the raffle will be sold at the fireworks themselves, and are still available in town for \$5 at Bud's Café, Bordonaro's, Farrell's Restaurant and the Top Dog Hot Dog Stand.

Prizes this year are: A chartered fishing expedition provided by Fever Sportfishing; a 32-inch LED TV from Gene's TV & Appliance; a

\$250 gift certificate at Angela's Fine Jewelry; 50 gallons of No. 2 fuel oil from Daniels Energy; green fees for 18 holes of golf for four at Quarry Ridge golf course; a DVD player from Gene's TV & Appliance; a banner featuring celebrity signatures; a NASCAR hat signed by Joey Logano; a \$50 gift certificate at Farrell's Restaurant; and four tickets to the Portland Agricultural Fair.

In addition, all expenses, such as the cost of the fireworks, police protection, lights and sound and portable toilets are covered by donations from businesses and the public, Hoy said.

Hoy also said she wanted to remind residents that, since there were no fireworks last year there was no donation campaign, and there are no surplus funds to apply to this year's fireworks.

"If we can't cover the expenses for this year's fireworks show, it could put the fireworks in jeopardy in future years," she said.

Donations can be sent in before and after the fireworks, with a check payable to Portland Fireworks, c/o Portland Police, 265 Main St., Portland, CT 06480.

In addition, attendees will be able to donate the night of, Hoy said.

# Confusion Over ‘Get Out the Vote’ Calls in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Town officials launched an investigation into recent phone calls encouraging residents to vote ‘yes’ in last week’s school budget referendum.

The phone calls all were made with a Colchester Public Schools’ telephone number as the caller identification.

According to town officials, there was a complaint filed at Town Hall last Tuesday, June 23, about phone calls encouraging residents to support that day’s budget referendum. The calls, the complaint stated, originated from a Jack Jackter Intermediate School telephone number.

Officials investigated the calls, and said they learned the calls were made by a third-party vendor in Texas hired by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) union. AFT represents Colchester’s teachers, paraprofessionals and cafeteria workers.

The calls were made last Monday and Tuesday to AFT members who reside in Colchester.

Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu explained that the local Colchester AFT would have gone through the state AFT Connecticut to make the call. Mathieu was unsure if AFT Connecticut has used the vendor from Texas in the past.

According to town officials, the third-party vendor needed a phone number for the caller ID – and that number was plucked from a website listing for Colchester AFT. The number – which is indeed the JJIS phone number – showed up on people’s caller IDs as coming from the “Town of Colchester.”

State statute prohibits town resources from being used to advocate for or against an item being voted on at referendum.

“We did do an investigation and that is how we know the calls were made by the company,” Mathieu said. The company “just looked up AFT Colchester, saw the number which was

listed and used it.”

“Any of these telemarketing firms can use basically any number for a caller ID,” First Selectman Stan Soby explained. “The number they chose was from the webpage of the AFT Colchester which had a Jack Jackter phone number listed as the contact. At some point someone pulled that number.”

The number that should have been used, Soby said, was the AFT Connecticut number. Soby said he was unsure if calls like these have been made in previous referendums.

AFT Connecticut and its counsel have been made aware of the complaint over the use of a town telephone number.

“This use was not authorized by either the Colchester Board of Education or the Town of Colchester,” town officials said in a statement.

Calls only went out to AFT members who live in Colchester, Mathieu confirmed, and the

union is not affiliated with the town or the school system.

“They are their own private group,” Mathieu said of the AFT.

AFT Connecticut, in a letter to Mathieu, apologized for any confusion that was caused by the calls, and said it takes full responsibility.

Soby told the *Rivereast* there was no violation against the town because there were indeed no school resources used to make the calls.

“It’s not like people were at the school making phone calls using school phones,” Soby said. “This was the unfortunate use of a number. It could have been the first selectman’s number. It happened to be Jackter.”

After the letter from AFT Connecticut stating their full responsibility for the matter, Soby said the situation is resolved.

## Colchester Man Dies in East Haddam Crash

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A Colchester man died last Saturday after his motorcycle collided with a pickup truck in East Haddam.

Rocco Albano, 62, of 14 O’Connell Rd., was transported to Hartford Hospital where he was pronounced deceased after the accident on the East Haddam Colchester Turnpike near Launching Area Road.

State Police reported that the accident occurred around 4 p.m. and the other driver,

Samantha Collette, 18, of Middletown, was not injured. Albano was on his Harley Davidson motorcycle at the time while Collette was driving a Chevrolet Silverado.

The cause of the crash is still under investigation by state police and anyone with information is asked to call Trooper Thomas Kelo at 860-465-5400 ext. 4009.

Albano’s obituary appears on page 26.

## Colchester Police News

6/24: State Police said Alexander Rivera, 29, of 16 Nelton St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with operating under suspension and failure to drive in the established lane.

6/25: State Police said Peter Neves, 48, of 122 Meetinghouse Ln., Franklin, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and breach of peace.

6/26: Colchester Police said they are investigating after a business at 199 Old Hartford Rd. was broken into. Police reported three separate doors were damaged, but nothing was sto-

len. Anyone with information can call Officer Adam Regnere at 860-537-7270.

6/26: State Police said Tiffany Menendez, 26, of 101 Vanblock Ave., Hartford, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

6/27: Colchester Police said they are investigating after numerous mailboxes were damaged along West Road and Carli Boulevard during the early morning hours on June 27. Anyone with information can call Officer Adam Regnere at 860-537-7270.

# Old Home Days Return with Russ Oakes Tribute

by John Tyczkowski

East Hampton’s Old Home Days Glorious Celebration, a mainstay in town for decades, returns as usual and on schedule next Thursday, despite high school renovation construction.

Pam Joslyn Greenwald, Old Home Days Committee president, said the parade will still kick off at the high school.

“There will be no traffic allowed on Hills Avenue or North Maple Street from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday [July 11], except for residents, construction personnel and people involved with the parade,” she said. “The parade route is unchanged, but there will be no parking allowed at or near the high school.”

People should park at the middle school, and take the OHDC shuttle into town for the parade, Joslyn Greenwald said.

That shuttle will also run Friday from 5 p.m. to close and Saturday from 11 a.m. to close every half hour, but will not run on Thursday, she said.

The parade begins at 11 a.m. Saturday, and will finish around 1 p.m. to allow time for a ceremony before the celebrations resume at 1:30 p.m.

The theme for this year’s parade is Flags Over East Hampton, in honor of Russ Oakes, who passed away earlier this year. Oakes was a fixture of Old Home Day celebrations in his role as parade chair for over 20 years and one-time OHDC president.

Oakes, also known as “Mr. Old Home Day,” began the Flags Over East Hampton program in 2007, which involved placing dozens of American flags around town to honor veterans. Oakes was a veteran himself.

There will also be, for the first time, a Russell Oakes memorial trophy, presented to the creators of the parade float which best encapsulates this year’s theme.

“We tried to find a respectful way to salute and honor Russ,” Joslyn Greenwald said. “He’ll also be the parade marshal in absence this year.”

Oakes’ children will return this year as usual

to serve as parade marshals for sections of the parade route, she said.

This year, resident Cap Rourke and her fiancé Dan Egan will serve as parade chairs.

“They both jumped in feet first to fill some big shoes,” Joslyn Greenwald said. “I’d like to recognize them for their hard work as well.”

And of course, there’s plenty more to experience besides the parade.

Jim Vick, OHDC entertainment chairperson, said he’s particularly proud of this year’s music lineup all three days.

Thursday will feature UConn student band Kalimur with its brand of alternative rock from 7 p.m. to 8:20 p.m., followed by The Merks, inspired by indie rock group The Strokes, from 8:40 p.m. to 10 p.m.

On Friday, ‘60s and ‘70s rock act The Neybas, named Hall of Famers in the *Hartford Advocate’s* annual Grand Band Slam, plays a five-hour “marathon set” until 11 p.m., and will be joined by special guests throughout.

Finally on Saturday, Vick described the lineup as “East Hampton rocks East Hampton,” because three of the four bands are from town, and the fourth, Wallingford’s Juice Box, “has close ties to East Hampton,” as some of the members are from town.

John Moore will play an acoustic set from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. Kozmic Voodoo, a new group featuring members of the Voodoo River Band, will perform from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Juice Box, a female lead singer-anchored cover band, will play from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and finally “the legendary” party band Johnny 5 will close out from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Thursday, celebrations will be held from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., and activities wristbands will cost \$15 for the night. Magician Peter James will also be on hand for a performance before the music begins at 7.

Friday, wristbands will cost \$20 for the night from 6-11 p.m. And on Saturday, there will be two wristband periods, both of which cost \$20: 1 p.m. to 5:59 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Popular attractions such as the bubble tent



**Russ Oakes is shown here relaxing with his wife Sheila behind Center School during last July’s Old Home Days. Oakes, involved with the glorious celebration for 25 years until his death in January, will be honored at this year’s parade.**

and the hula-hoop rodeo, will return this year, Vick said.

And though there’s the additional cost to partake in the attractions, Old Home Days remains free to walk in as always, he said.

In addition, the annual raffle with its drawing at 8:10 p.m. returns, with 14 raffle prizes and only 1,200 tickets sold. Proceeds allow the committee to provide free entertainment, the parade and the giveaways, Joslyn Greenwald said.

A full list of prizes is listed in the *Rivereast*, and online at [ehohd.org](http://ehohd.org).

Joslyn Greenwald said the three-day glorious celebration is the product of many people

in town, including the approximately 12-member committee who works year round to raise over \$70,000 each year to provide for all activities.

“Big thanks to a great team effort and a bigger thanks to the individuals, businesses, and community organizations that support this yearly event,” she said. “We invite everyone from East Hampton and surrounding areas to join us in the festivities – come join us and experience the great community spirit.”

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For more information, visit [ehohd.org](http://ehohd.org), or search “East Hampton Old Home Days” on Facebook.

# Dugas Officially Resigns from East Hampton Schools

by John Tyczkowski

Diane Dugas has formally resigned as superintendent of schools in East Hampton, effective Tuesday, June 30.

In a statement from the Board of Education, board chair Ken Barber said the resignation was “by mutual agreement.”

Barber said he and the board would not comment on the details of the separation beyond the press release the board sent out last Friday.

However, on Tuesday Barber did take the time to dispel one piece of gossip that’s been floating around town in recent weeks; he said any allegations of embezzlement by Dugas are “preposterous and blatantly untrue.”

In the press release, Barber praised Dugas as “a knowledgeable, forward-thinking and innovative leader who has consistently demonstrated a high level of professionalism and dedication to the town and profession.”

Specifically, he listed her accomplishments as: implementing a transparent budget; implementing full-day kindergarten; moving the high school building project forward; and working to increase one-to-one technology access for students and staff through updated infrastructure and equipment.

“As Ms. Dugas moves on to explore other opportunities, the board wishes her the very best for a successful future,” Barber said.

Dugas could not be reached for comment.

At the board’s Monday evening meeting, the board voted 4-0 to appoint Mark Winzler as

interim superintendent in the district effective July 1. Tania Sones – who was only appointed to the board last week – abstained from the vote, and board members Josh Piteo, Scott Minnick, Steven Kelley and Joanne Barmasse were absent from the meeting.

Winzler had previously served as interim superintendent for the town between January and June of 2013 after Judith Golden’s retirement in late 2012.

Barber said the board was “very lucky” that Winzler was available.

“Mark’s a known quality,” he said. “He was here before; the town first passed the high school renovation project under his interimship, and he managed to get the school budget passed the first time.”

“Mark’s also well-respected by our staff and our administrators, and he was available and could immediately step in, so he was a natural choice,” Barber said.

Interestingly, Winzler comes direct from serving as Hebron’s interim superintendent of schools, where he spent the past six weeks working with Hebron’s new superintendent, Tim Van Tassel, to ease his transition from East Hampton, where he had been the assistant schools superintendent.

“I was right next door [in Hebron] when I got the call from Ken,” Winzler said. “And I was happy to return. I’ve always, always liked it here in East Hampton.”

“They have a great faculty and great staff, and I got along well with [town manager] Mike [Maniscalco] and Joanne [Barmasse],” he said.

Barmasse was board chair when Winzler was previously interim superintendent, and she recently was appointed to the board to fill the vacancy left by member Bill Marshall’s resignation.

Winzler is something of a seasoned veteran of the interim superintendent scene; this marks his ninth interim position in six years – though the first town that he’s returned to. In addition to Hebron, he’s also been interim superintendent in such other Connecticut towns as Plymouth and Columbia.

“Humbly, I’ve never looked for a job, but my phone rings a lot,” he said.

Winzler said he was eager to get started – and again stressed he was happy to return.

“We’ve always had good communication between the town and [the board], and I hope to continue that,” he said.

The board also appointed itself as the superintendent search committee, as it has done in the past, Barber said.

Barber said the board would “move with all haste” to find a permanent superintendent for the district.

That included approval of the hiring of a search firm to aid in the process as well.

In addition, the board talked about eliminating the position of assistant superintendent with

Van Tassel’s departure.

“In light of several years of conflicting budgets, and given this transition, we’re going to see if we can’t shut down the position of assistant superintendent and bring back the curriculum director position,” Barber said.

In addition, Barber said the board would look at a dedicated human resources position as well, something that had been part of the assistant superintendent’s duties along with curriculum programming.

“We’re going to see if we can reorganize the Central Office a little bit,” he said.

\* \* \*

Monday’s meeting was also the first without Emily Fahle; she resigned from the board just before the end of the school year, as her family is moving out of state.

“I have been honored to serve the citizens of East Hampton as a member of the Board of Education for the last two years,” she said in a recent letter. “I sought the office because I believe every child in East Hampton deserves the best education money can buy and taxpayers deserve a great value for their money spent on education.”

“Thank you for the opportunity to serve,” she added. “It has been a pleasure.”

Sones was appointed to the board last week to take Fahle’s place; her term runs through November.

# New Rules to be Enforced At Sears Park in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

Last Tuesday, the Town Council put its support behind a number of new rules governing the public’s use of Sears Park, the boat launch and the sports courts.

At the June 23 meeting, Town Manager Michael Maniscalco both discussed a series of incidents involving teens aged approximately 14-19 engaging in illegal activity on park property over the past few weeks.

Some incidents included minors smoking tobacco at the park, one minor who drove a motorized scooter around the park, and a minor who pulled out a pocketknife to show to another minor, Maniscalco said after the meeting.

He also said Police Chief Sean Cox had spoken to those minors involved, as well as their parents.

“Over the past few weeks, there have been a number of these types of incidents,” Maniscalco said at the meeting. “Because of that I believe this requires a bit of urgency on our part.”

The new rules, as proposed by Parks and Recreation Department Director Jaime Krajewski, would include closing the park at sunset or 8:30 p.m., and bans on smoking and the use of any tobacco products, profanity, fighting, littering and brandishing weapons. Motor-

ized scooters or motor-assisted bicycles would also not be permitted in the park.

Krajewski has also proposed a ban on outside vendors at the park.

These new rules would be in addition to the current Sears Park rules, Krajewski said.

“There are currently rules posted at Sears Park, but some of them are outdated rules,” she said. “The board needs to be updated anyway, and I thought this would be a good opportunity for an overhaul to make the park more family-friendly.”

Councilors wanted to know when these new rules would be posted.

“We’re already in the throes of summer now,” council chairwoman Barbara Moore said.

Krajewski said that though she originally intended to take time to see how the summer went without the rules addition, but that the recent activity prompted an “urgent” response.

“As soon as we can all agree on the rules, I would want to get moving on this pretty much immediately,” she said.

Also in attendance, Cox updated the council on how he was working with his staff to head off the illegal activity.

“We’ve stepped up patrols around the park,

on foot,” he said. “I’m also encouraging the guys to eat lunch there as well. We want to get out of the cars, start interacting more with people there and start establishing relationships.”

Krajewski and the councilors also talked about flexibility with the rules in terms of the basketball and tennis courts, which are lit until about 10 p.m.

“There is a large group of youths who go to the courts regularly and who really are playing ball each night,” Krajewski said. “That’s what we like to see.”

Councilors decided to let the courts stay open until 10 p.m. when the lights go off, and to clarify that the sunset/8:30 p.m. closure rule would apply to the park and the parking lots only.

Council vice chair Kevin Reich also pointed out that due to a past realignment of the park’s entrance, the current general rules board Krajewski referred to, posted at the gate house, was no longer immediately visible to park goers.

As a result, the council said it supported the addition of a new sign at the park entrance with the updated rules in addition to the revision of

existing signs at the boat launch and waterfront.

Ultimately, the council put its support behind the proposed additions to the park rules with a unanimous vote.

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Maniscalco also gave the council a summary of the status of the high school construction, which turned a significant corner Saturday, June 20.

“The entire high school campus is now an active construction site and will not be open to the public,” he said, as of that date.

Maniscalco said the proper paperwork has been filed with the police, and that people walking on the property will be seen and treated as trespassers.

The high school, the track facilities behind it and all other fenced-off areas will be off-limits until Aug. 28 upon the start of the 2015-2016 school year.

High school administrators, teachers and staff, as well as their offices, have been relocated to Memorial School for the summer.

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The Town Council’s next meeting will take place Tuesday, July 14, at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room.

# Possible Property Purchase Heads to Andover Referendum

by Geeta Schrayter

The Andover town office community room was packed Tuesday night as residents gathered to share their thoughts on, and vote on, the possible purchase of a piece of blighted property in town – something they ultimately did, sending it to a July 14 referendum by a vote of 71-44.

The property, a house at 12 Center St., has been vacant since 2008 and was described during a presentation at the special town meeting as having extensive damage to both the exterior and interior, with a severely damaged roof, water damage and mold inside the building. Considered a “visible eyesore” from Route 6, the property is the site of regular trespassing and vandalism.

Last November, foreclosure proceedings began with the owner – whose last known address is in northern California – failing to respond to all notification on the legal actions; the foreclosure concluded in March and the property went on the market the following month for \$38,500. And now, the Andover Center Street Committee is hoping the town will be the one to buy it.

During Tuesday’s presentation by committee member Dan Warren, he explained the property is within the “Historic Andover Node” designated by the Economic Development Commissions’ master plan for Route 6. He added the property is in the area suggested as a future “town center” in the 2005 Plan of Conservation and Development – as well as the draft of the 2015 POCD.

Therefore, acting on this particular piece of property, he said, could increase the town’s chance of securing future grant money, since it would show the town was taking action to follow the POCD instead of letting it fall by the wayside.

If the property is purchased, Warren said the building would be demolished for a cost estimated between \$35,000 and \$55,000, and the land – 0.62 acres – would be redeveloped. While the exact redevelopment plans haven’t been decided, a possibility shared by the committee is to turn the land into an access point for the nearby trails and the Hop River State Park.

Warren showed images of an access point in Vernon as a possibility for Andover; the point would include a small pavilion, picnic table, bench, historical information on the town and a parking area. Such a redevelopment, he furthered, would be funded through grants, while the purchase and demolition could be funded a number of different ways.

Funding options included using unexpended budget funds, money from the capital non-re-

curring fund, money from the Local Capital Improvement Program, or money from the Open Space Fund.

Last Wednesday, the Board of Finance voted unanimously to approve up to \$110,000 for the purchase, demolition and lot improvements to the property if the proposal is approved by the voters. Another motion was unanimously approved for up to \$45,000 of that to be Open Space Funds, but details on where the total amount would come from have yet to be determined.

During discussion on the proposal Tuesday, residents spoke both in favor of and against the purchase.

Resident Ken Mosher said purchasing the property brought “no value” to the town.

“The town gets nothing except showing we’re implementing a plan to get more grants to spend more money,” he stated. “If there’s value to the land, it can be purchased and a new house can be built; the town has no business doing this.”

Meanwhile, resident Curt Dowling said there was a long list of town projects he’d prefer to see money spent on, such as a new oil tank for the fire department, a new senior center, a new roof on the town garage and updating the transfer station.

But resident Mike Donnelly was in favor of the project, saying, “I see the value in investing in town” through purchasing the blighted property.

Resident Karen Osborne said she regularly walks on the trails, which she accesses by coming up Center Street and walking past the property, and she said she’s “ashamed at the condition and deterioration of the building.”

She added, “I’m ashamed it’s there and we’re sitting here arguing whether or not we should purchase and destroy a building full of blight.”

Osborne concluded, to applause, “Let’s make the residents who live here proud to live here and attract other people to move into town.”

Resident Joseph Remesch said “it makes sense to buy” the property, but said the town shouldn’t use Open Space funds to do so; this way, he said, “all options are open and we still have control over what to do with it.”

Remesch then called the question, ending discussion.

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Also approved and sent to referendum Tuesday was a request to grant a right of way at the end of Riverside Drive to Joshua Clark and Christopher Wierzbicki, owners of a 60-acre piece of property at 64 Long Hill Rd.

At the meeting, Wierzbicki explained he and Clark planned to build two houses on the land,



Residents voted Wednesday to send the possible purchase of a blighted house on Center Street to referendum. The house has been vacant since 2008 and is considered a “visible eyesore” in town. If the purchase is approved, the house will be demolished and the property will be redeveloped. Photo courtesy of Julia Haverl.

but they needed better access, which they hoped to gain through the town easement. If granted, he explained this would include, at no cost to the town, repair of the current road along with the box culvert that’s a part of it – a repair they already had approval for from the state; it would also provide access to a piece of town property that’s currently difficult to reach.

Their other option, he stated, would be to build a street off of Long Hill Road – a route substantially more expensive, which would mean the owners would have to subdivide their property to absorb the cost.

However, if the easement were granted, the owners would be able to retain all their land and expressed to the town they’d put some of the land into a conservation easement.

Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Eric Anderson said Tuesday “from our perspective it’s a good deal for both the town and the applicants.”

He mentioned the property the two had purchased had been eyed by the Planning and Zoning Commission as a parcel of land to acquire for open space.

“This was property Planning and Zoning would have purchased if we got our act together” but Clark and Wierzbicki “beat us to it,” he said.

And so, having the owners agree to keep the construction to two houses and place part of the land into a conservation easement was the next best thing.

In a letter submitted to the town by the applicants, the two wrote their intention was to find a solution “which suits both the towns’ needs as well as their own. The easement would benefit both parties greatly to ensure environmentally sensitive property remains untouched [from] any future development as well as providing the town access to their own land which is currently inaccessible.”

Those present Tuesday voted 76-28 to send the request to referendum.

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Both proposals head before voters Tuesday, July 14. Voting will take place from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in the town office community room, 17 School Rd.

## EHHS Project Funding Okayed by State

by John Tyczkowski

The East Hampton High School renovation project will receive all of its estimated state aid after all.

Monday evening, the General Assembly passed in special session a bill allowing East Hampton to secure \$7 million in reimbursement funds for the high school’s renovation.

House Bill 7102 – which deals with various school and renovation projects around the state – passed with 144 voting ‘yes’ in the House, with seven absences, and in the Senate with 36 voting ‘yes’ and no absences, according to the bill’s entry on the General Assembly website.

Section 38 of the legislation allows the project to be classified as renovate-as-new, which allows the town to secure the maximum amount of reimbursement, which is half the project’s \$51 million cost.

Last November, the project – which the town passed at referendum in 2013, and which has already begun construction – was reclassified by the state as “extensive alteration-roof replacement,” which reduced the available reimbursement funds and necessitated the high school’s square footage be reduced to under 99,000 square feet to qualify for funding.

The high school’s current area stands at 118,000 square feet, much of which is locked up in empty space courtesy of oversized hall-

ways and a large auditorium.

Language in Section 38 also increased the total amount of reimbursable area for the project to 119,000 square feet.

The bill provides for funding for more than 25 school construction projects from districts including Old Saybrook, Bridgeport, North Haven, and Woodbridge, as well as the required language for East Hampton’s renovation project, and those in other towns including Newington, Trumbull and Fairfield.

Sharon Smith, chairwoman of the high school building committee, said the committee had felt “optimistic but concerned” before the news of the bill’s passage.

“We are elated and it takes a huge pressure off of our shoulders,” she said of the notwithstanding language successfully passing. “We owe a huge thanks to [state Rep.] Melissa Ziobron and [state Sen.] Art Linares for their help.”

Ziobron, a sponsor of the bill, said she was “very thrilled to have the school construction bill voted on and passed.”

“I’m glad this issue is resolved and that I was able to help secure those dollars for the taxpayers and especially the students in town,” Ziobron said. “Rest assured, the town will receive that reimbursement now.”

## Family Dog Dies in Colchester Fire

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

No one was injured, but a family dog died in a structure fire at an apartment complex Tuesday.

Colchester Hayward Fire Department Chief Walter Cox reported that the call came in around 2:30 p.m. for a fire at 12 Balaban Rd., the Gaia Gardens Apartments. According to Cox, the owner of apartment 715 came home from work to find heavy smoke inside his first floor apartment.

Cox said no one had been inside the apartment at the time and it was unknown how long the fire had been burning. The windows of the apartment were also shut.

“There was heavy fire and charring damage to the first floor,” Cox said. “Because of the lack of oxygen, all of the damage was contained to the first floor.”

Units were on the scene in 10 minutes, Cox said, and mutual aid from the Salem, Hebron, Marlborough and Gardner Lake fire departments responded. As there were no fire hydrants in the area, firefighters had to bring in water tanks. However, Cox said very little water was used because the fire was smol-

dering by the time units arrived on scene.

There was a dog inside the apartment at the time, Cox said, and it passed away in the fire.

Cox reported there was one Colchester firefighter who was transported to the hospital to be examined for possible heat stroke, but was not injured.

Firefighters checked the surrounding apartments, Cox said, and found the apartment closest to unit 715 had high concentrations of carbon monoxide. There was also a cat inside that apartment, who had to be given oxygen by firefighters; the feline was transported to the vet, and is okay, Cox said.

Also, Cox said, the second-floor apartment above 715 sustained smoke damage.

Firefighters checked all of the apartments with carbon monoxide meters and ventilated the properties.

Red Cross is helping out the apartment’s owner after the unit was deemed “unlivable,” Cox said.

The cause of the fire is under investigation by the Colchester fire marshal.

# Prosecutors Won't Seek Appeal on Charge Dismissal

by Geeta Schrayter

State prosecutors decided this week not to seek an appeal for the dismissal of the majority of charges against Marlborough resident Paul Sibiga, 51.

Sibiga had been charged with 49 misdemeanor counts of permitting minors to possess alcohol and first-degree reckless endangerment in relation to a party held in August 2013. Authorities say Hebron resident Connor McKee left the party on Sibiga's property before crashing his pickup truck in an accident that killed one of his passengers, Hebron resident Paige Houston, who was 17 at the time.

(McKee had a blood alcohol content of 0.11 percent at the time of the crash and pleaded guilty to second-degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle last September. He was sentenced to five years in prison and five years of probation.)

Following six days of evidence presented by Tolland State's Attorney Matthew Gedansky last month, Hartford Superior Court Judge Jose Suarez dismissed 45 of the 49 counts against Sibiga. According to previously-published reports, Gedansky then conferred with appellate lawyers and asked the judge to dismiss the remaining charges, after which he asked for permission to appeal Suarez's ruling.

But this week, Gedansky said "we decided not to seek permission for an appeal," a decision that was filed Monday.

He furthered, "Our appellate division assisted me in researching whether we would be able to prevail on that appeal of the judge's granting of dismissal; we researched into case law, into this particular issue, and then [reviewed] the transcript of the judge's ruling."

Gedansky added, "We believed that the judge made certain factual findings that were not supported by the evidence and mischaracterized the law."

But in the end, he said, "Even though we believe the judge ruled improperly ... our research showed that we would not be able to prevail on an appeal."

Sibiga's defense attorney, Paul Melocowsky, said this week "I didn't see a reason for [Gedansky] to appeal in the first place."

He added regarding the overall outcome,

"We're very happy about it. It was the right ruling. It was the right thing to do."

Melocowsky elaborated, saying after six days of evidence and a number of witnesses, "the state failed to show beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Sibiga acted with reckless indifference to human life" in regards to the reckless endangerment charges. Relating to the charges of permitting minors to possess alcohol, he said "the state was unable to prove that Mr. Sibiga acted with criminal negligence."

Melocowsky furthered, "The jury would have to be able to find beyond a reasonable doubt that the state met its burden of proof, and the judge agreed with us that it fell short."

He concluded, "The facts of this case necessitated a finding of 'not guilty,' and it warranted the granting of the motion of acquittal."

Speaking on the outcome this week, Houston's mother, Michelle, reflected on the fact there was nothing that would bring her daughter back.

"No matter what, Paige is no longer physically with us and nothing will change that," Michelle said.

"We hope that others will learn from our tragedy," she added. "I will honor Paige by continuing to speak at schools about the dangers of drinking irresponsibly, and how it feels from this mother's perspective to lose a child in such a tragic manner."

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Michelle recently spoke at Parish Hill High School in Chaplin, where she said the students were "amazing." She added she ran into some of them at the mall days later, where they recognized her, gave her a hug and said, "'You are so amazing. You changed our lives - please know that.' And I said, 'If I changed even one, that's what matters.'"

Along with looking to make a difference in others' lives, Michelle said speaking about what happened "was so therapeutic for me" - and is something she's looking to do more of in the future.

She added it was, of course, "hard to stand there, but I feel like Paige wanted to become that teacher."

For information about having Michelle speak, email [KMPCS@comcast.net](mailto:KMPCS@comcast.net).

## Colchester

### Angelina Yadevaio

Angelina Yadevaio passed away Tuesday morning, June 30, at Harrington Court. She was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., March 15, 1919, the daughter of Angelo and Maddalena (D'Angelo) Yadevaio.

Angelina had been employed for the former F.W. Woolworth Co. as a sales manager for 30 years, retiring many years ago. She was loved and will be missed by everyone.

Angelina is survived by two nieces, Patricia Nevin of Merrick, Long Island, N.Y., and Anna Morel of Lisbon, N.Y.; and her cousin and caretaker, Edna Duryea of Oakdale.

She was predeceased by two brothers, Joseph and John Yadevaio.

Visitation at Godere Funeral Home, 21 North 2nd Ave., Taftville, was Thursday, July 2, followed by a graveside service that morning in Maplewood Cemetery in Norwich.

## Obituaries

### Colchester

#### Hyman Sidney Stollman

Hymie Stollman, 87, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Friday, June 26.

Hymie was born on June 6, 1928 in New York City, moved to Colchester shortly thereafter and remained a lifelong resident of Colchester. He graduated from Bacon Academy then attended the Hart School of Music.



At age 18, Hymie was a 1st violinist with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra before becoming a successful poultry farmer then proprietor of the golf course he personally designed and built, the Chantclair Golf Course, now operated by two of his three sons.

Hymie was the son of late Morris and Molly Stollman, who emigrated to the United States from Belarus and also lived their entire adult lives in Colchester.

Hymie is survived by Anita (Gigi), his wife of 63 years, and their three sons and five grandchildren: Steven of Key Biscayne, Florida, his wife Kristen and children Patrick, Edwin & Daniel; Carey of Colchester, his wife Marcia and son Jason; and David of Colchester, his wife Mary and son Ryan. He is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews; his sister Harriet and her husband Robert Berland of West Hartford; brother-in-law Sam Berkowitz; sister-in-law Cele Fruchtman; sister-in-law Lenore Berkowitz and sister-in-law Estelle Flaum and husband Gill.

Hymie was predeceased by his sister Marilyn. Funeral services were held Monday, June 29, in the sanctuary of Congregation Ahavath Achim Synagogue, 84 Lebanon Ave., Colchester, with Rabbi Kenneth Alter officiating. Interment followed at the Ahavath Achim Cemetery located on Taintor Hill Road. A memorial period (shiva) was observed at the Stollman home, 288 Old Hebron Rd., Colchester, on Monday and Tuesday evenings.

In honor of Hy, donations in his memory may be made to Congregation Ahavath Achim Synagogue.

The Stollman family wishes to express their sincere gratitude to the staff of the Hartford Hospital for the exceptional care provided during Hymie's final days. We would also like to thank Colchester's Dr. Kaye for his support during these difficult times.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with the care of these services. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

### Colchester

#### Rocco Daniel Albano

Rocco Daniel Albano, 62, of Colchester, died Saturday, June 27, at Hartford Hospital. Born May 5, 1953, in Hartford, he was the son of the late Louis and Carmella (Gaudiana) Albano.

Prior to working in transportation, Mr. Albano had a long career in the retail industry where he specialized in the sale of hunting and fishing supplies. Passionate about helping others become skilled archers and marksmen, Mr. Albano also worked as an instructor for archery and firearms safety. He was a National Rifle Association (NRA) licensed instructor for basic handgun safety helping countless students navigate the complex pathway to responsible gun ownership.

Mr. Albano loved all things out-of-doors and when not working, enjoyed fishing, hang gliding, and piloting ultra-light aircraft, avocations he shared with his beloved son, Daniel. A voice in the fight to save the former Griswold Airport, Mr. Albano was avid about opportunities for ultra-light aircraft pilots to fly the machines they love. He will be missed greatly by his family and his friends in the flying community and elsewhere.

He is survived by his son, PFC Daniel K. Albano of Colchester; his cousin, Donald Ranaudo and his wife Dawn of Old Saybrook; and many other cousins and friends.

Funeral services were held Thursday, July 2, in Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will be at the convenience of the family in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery in Bloomfield. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home Thursday morning, before the service.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

### Andover

#### Marie R. Burbank

Marie R. Burbank, 70, the wife of Robert F. Burbank, died Saturday, June 27, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., she was the daughter of the late Michael and Katherine (Anderson) Regan.

Marie attended St. John's University, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. An Andover resident since 1971, she served as the town clerk. Marie was also an independent site acquisition contractor. Marie enjoyed spending time with family and friends on cruises through the Caribbean, trips to the casinos and vacationing at her summer cottage on Frye Island, Maine. She was interested in politics and remained active in her community throughout her life. She was a lover of dogs and cared for many over the years. Marie was adored by her grandchildren and spoiled them with love and sweets.

Besides her husband, Marie is survived by her children, Robert Burbank Jr. and his fiancée, Julie Morawski, of Bloomfield, Michael Burbank and his wife, Carrie, of San Diego, Calif., Allen Burbank of Andover, and Noelle Egan and her husband, Paul, of Manchester; her grandchildren, Robert Burbank III, William Burbank, Vincent Burbank, Logan Burbank, Alexander Egan and a baby boy due on Labor Day. She is also survived by her sister, Elaine McGee and her husband, Michael, of Palatine, Ill.; and many loved nieces and nephews.

Besides her parents, she was predeceased by her brother, Michael Regan Jr.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Thursday, July 2, at Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St., Hebron, with burial following in Townsend Cemetery, Andover. Family and friends called at John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center St., Manchester, Wednesday, July 1.

Memorial donations may be made in Marie's name to Andover Congregational Church, Andover Food Pantry, P.O. Box 55, Andover, CT 06232.

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

### Colchester

#### Susan Engelson

Susan (Hurwitz) Engelson, 65, of Vernon, beloved wife of 41 years to David A. Engelson, passed away peacefully Sunday, June 28. Born in Hartford, the daughter of the late Meyer and Mary (Indursky) Hurwitz, she grew up and lived in Colchester, Columbia and South Windsor before moving to Vernon 11 years ago.

She was a graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester. Susan was a graduate of Mitchell College in New London, and she also attended Bryant College in Rhode Island. She was a member of Temple Beth Sholom B'nai Israel in Manchester. Susan was a lifetime member of Hadassah, and was past president of the sisterhood at Temple B'nai Israel. She was a preschool teacher at Temple Beth Sholom for many years. She was a caring and loving wife, mother, grandmother and friend, and she was deeply devoted to her grandchildren.

In addition to her husband David, she is survived by her children, Marc Engelson and his wife Robyn of Leesburg, Va., and Amy Jerusalem and her husband Alan of Natick, Mass., and her three grandchildren, Zach Engelson and Caleb and Eli Jerusalem.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, June 30, at Temple Beth Sholom B'nai Israel, 400 Middle Turnpike East, Manchester. Burial followed in Congregational B'nai Israel Cemetery, Edith Road, Vernon. Shiva was observed at the family home from Monday, June 29, through Thursday, July 2.

Please, no flowers; memorial donations in her memory may be made to Hockanum Valley Community Council Inc., Programs, 29 Naek Road, Suite 5A, Vernon, CT 06066.

Ladd-Turkington & Carmon Funeral Home in Vernon is caring for the arrangements. For online condolences and guestbook, visit [carmonfuneralhome.com](http://carmonfuneralhome.com).

### East Hampton

#### Dorothy M. Walden

It is with heavy hearts, the Braun family announces the passing of Dorothy M. Lance Braun Walden, 93, of East Hampton, on Monday, June 22, at Chestelm Convalescent Home.

Born July 28, 1921, she grew up in Pennsylvania.

Dorothy was predeceased by her husband John; five sons, Artie, Eddie, Ronnie, Albie and Stevie Braun; and daughter Deborah.

She leaves behind two sons, Sonny and Donnie Braun; a daughter, Dottie Owens; two stepsons, Skip and Tom Walden. She is also survived by 19 grandchildren, 39 great-grandchildren and 21 great-great-grandchildren.

She will be missed dearly.

### East Hampton

#### Barbara Goodwin Cantwell

Barbara Goodwin Cantwell of East Hampton, and a longtime resident of Glastonbury, died Saturday June 27, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital. She was born in Hartford to the late Charles R. and Amy T. Goodwin.

She is survived by her daughter Candace and her husband Gary Hartzell, of Charlotte, N.C., and sons Jeffrey O'Hara of Jupiter, Fla., John Ducas and Todd Ducas of East Hampton; and a sister, Shirley Oleskewicz of Suffield. She leaves five grandchildren, Jennifer Arnette, R. Charles Moors, Brian Ducas, Christina Ducas and Danielle Murphy. She also leaves great-grandchildren David, Thomas, William Murphy and Samuel Arnette.

She was predeceased by her son James Ducas, and two sisters Evelyn Knott and Jean Blount.

She was a 12th descendant of the Goodwin family, who, with the group led by Thomas Hooker, settled the city of Hartford. She was a legal secretary in the Hartford area for many years, retiring from Day Pitney in 1995.

She will be cremated. Services will be private.

### East Hampton

#### Walter Horace Godfrey Jr.

Walter Horace Godfrey Jr., 69, of East Hampton, died Wednesday, June 24, at Middlesex Healthcare Center. He was born in Hartford Oct. 17, 1945, and lived most of his life in Connecticut.

Walter proudly served in the U.S. Navy from 1966-67. He worked at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft and later retired from Connecticut Boiler Repair after many years of service. Walter loved riding his Harley and sharing good times with his brothers.

He is survived by his love and companion for over 20 years, Lynda Wilcox, and his two children with their spouses, Jennifer and Alexander Lindfors and their children, Travis and Hope of Terryville; and Christopher and Chrissy Godfrey of East Hartford. He is also survived by his two sisters, Beverly and Jackie, and his pets, Mille and Willie.

Calling hours were Sunday, June 28, with a memorial service that evening, at the Newkirk and Whitney Funeral Home, 318 Burnside Ave. East Hartford. Burial was private and at the convenience of the family.

To share a memory with the family, go to [newkirkandwhitney.com](http://newkirkandwhitney.com).

### East Hampton

#### Jeff Martin Hagan

Jeff Martin Hagan, 62, of East Hampton, passed away peacefully Wednesday, June 24, after a long battle with cancer. Jeff was born in Tacoma, Wash., July 12, 1952. He was the son of the late Francis J. and Frances L. (Martin) Hagan.

Jeff graduated from Lewis Mills in Burlington in 1971, then immediately took employment of New Departure in Bristol until his retirement. Jeff always always had a love for the outdoors (especially when fishing, hunting and working at Johnnycake Mt farm as a kid), sharing laughs with those around him, playing chess with his granddaughter, and telling the amazing stories of his past. He will always be remembered for his unique (and crazy) personality.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Justin and Natasha Hagan of Connecticut; his devoted daughter and son-in-law, Jolene and John Kutsukos of Florida; brother and sister-in-law, Brian and Jean Hagan of Connecticut; sister and brother-in-law, Gerri and Jack Mahon of Florida; four grandchildren, Nick, Alyssa, Brianna and Juliana; several cousins, and a few nieces and nephews.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to the staff of Middlesex Hospital and Hospice for their care and compassion through this difficult time.

Relatives and friends called at Funk Funeral Home, 35 Bellevue Ave., Bristol, on Wednesday, July 1, with a funeral service being celebrated that evening. Burial followed Thursday, July 2, at West Cemetery, with a graveside service that evening.

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

Visit Jeff's memorial website at [funkfuneralhome.com](http://funkfuneralhome.com).

### East Hampton

#### Albert F. Parlato

Albert F. Parlato, 85, of East Hampton, husband of Gloria R. (Dupont) Parlato, died Wednesday, June 24. He was born in New Haven, son of the late Fred and Louise (Carbone) Parlato.

He served in the U.S. Army, became an accomplished self-employed food broker, and valued family and friends. He loved to golf, dance, travel and enjoyed big family meals.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his children, Diane DiMorro, Louise Lloyd, Alison Parlato; stepchildren Guy and Liz Pelletier, Jay Pelletier, Lisa and Robert Paquette; a sister, Madeline Sarno; 10 grandchildren; and numerous great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by a sister, Elaine Mennone.

Relatives and friends were invited to the Giuliano-Sagarino Funeral Home at Brooklawn, 511 Brook St., Rocky Hill, on Sunday, June 28. Interment will be at a later date.

For online guestbook, visit [brooklawnfuneralhome.com](http://brooklawnfuneralhome.com).

### East Hampton

#### Jason A. Wills

Jason A. Wills, 32, of East Hampton, formerly of Wallingford, loving husband of Siobhan Smiles, passed away, Tuesday, June 30. Jason was born in Meriden Nov. 12, 1982, the son of Jesse Wills of East Hampton and Dawn McKeehan of Virginia.

In addition to his wife and parents, he is survived by his son, Alexander Wills. Jason is also survived by his sister, Jamie Lawler and her husband, Tait, of Guilford; his niece and nephews, whom were very special to him, Danielle Wills, and Noah and Lucas Lawler; his aunt, Dae-Ellen Bjornberg and her husband, John; and his uncles, Daniel E. McKeehan and Donald E. "Chip" McKeehan and his wife, Donna, all of Wallingford; and several cousins. Jason is also survived by his mother-in-law, Patricia Sheahan, of Meriden; his brothers-in-law; and sisters-in-law, Gabriel Smiles, Shaina Smiles, Brendan Smiles and Breanna Hubble and Jacqueline Smiles.

His family will receive relatives and friends in the Wallingford Funeral Home today, July 3, from 8-9:45 a.m., when the funeral cortege will proceed to Our Lady of Fatima Church in Yalesville, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Interment will be in St. John Cemetery in Wallingford.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in his memory may be sent to the Alexander Wills Education Fund, c/o The Wallingford Funeral Home, 809 N. Main St. Ext., Wallingford, CT 06492.

### Hebron

#### Bruno A. Begin

Bruno A. Begin, 77, of Vernon, formerly of South Windsor and Hebron, husband of the late Barbara A. (Cassells) Begin, died Saturday, June 27, 2015, peacefully at home.

He was born in Hartford April 15, 1938, son of the late Sylva and Yvonne (Racine) Begin, was raised in South Windsor, and became a resident of Hebron in 1964. Bruno returned to South Windsor in 2001 and had been a resident of Vernon since 2014.

Prior to retiring, he had been an auto body technician in the Hartford area for over 45 years. He loved boating and spending time with his family, and enjoyed watching UConn Huskies basketball.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Brian and Sandra Begin, of Coventry; two sisters, Marcelle Darna and Claudette Fidler; numerous nieces and nephews; and his special friend, Annie Osoldrieth and her extended family.

Besides his parents he was predeceased by three brothers, George, Claude, and Marc Begin; and a sister, Ann Tessier.

Bruno's family would like to extend a special thank-you to the staff at Welles Country Village & Utopia.

Visiting hours for family and friends were held Wednesday, July 1, at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester.

Memorial contributions may be made to Vitas Hospice, 628 Hebron Ave., Suite 300, Glastonbury, CT 06033.

To leave a message for his family, visit [holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com](http://holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com).